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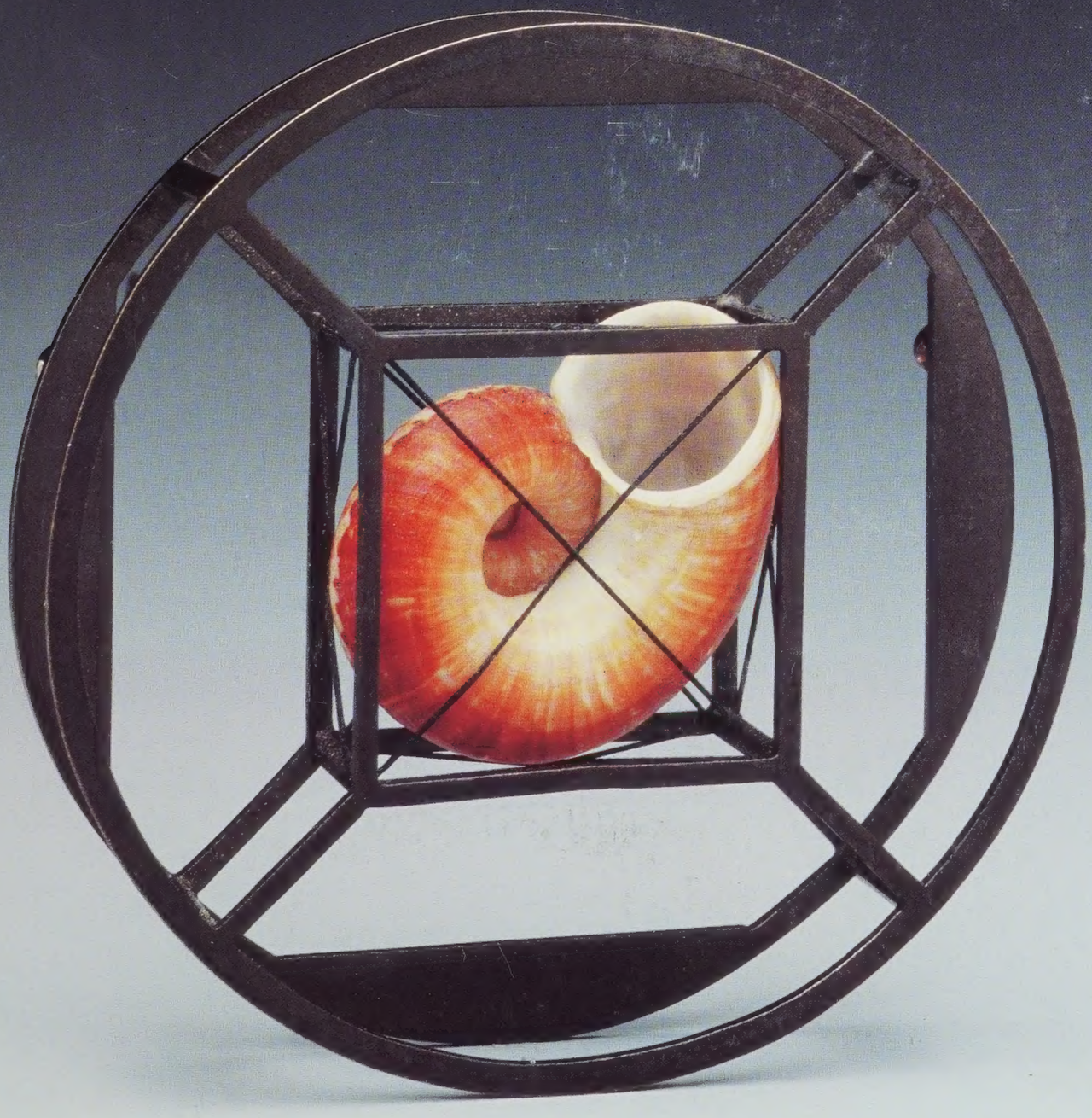

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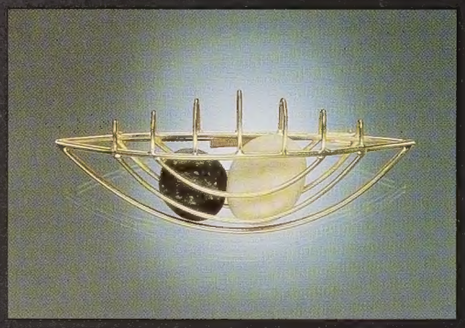

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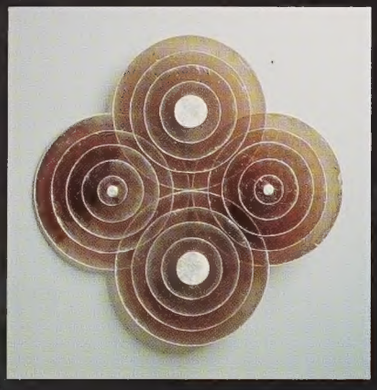

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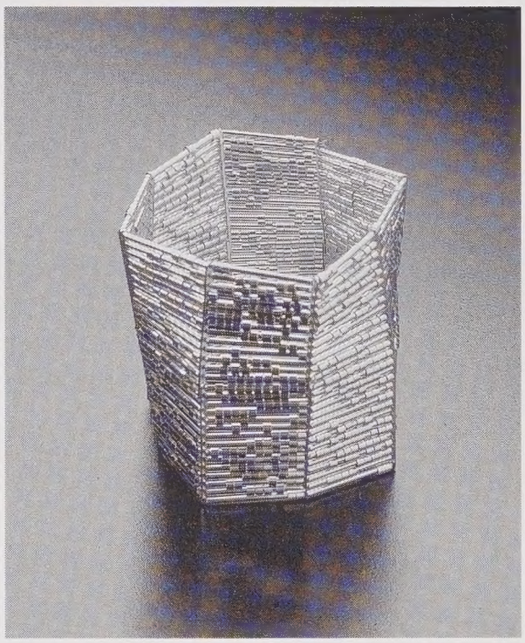

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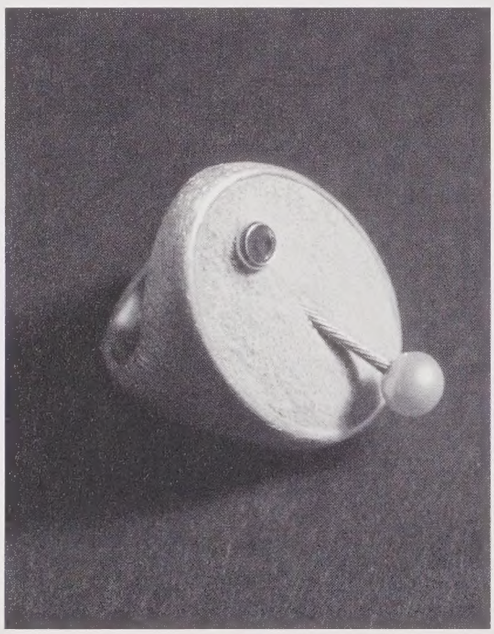

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Editorial

Over the course of my tenure as editor I have participated in many discussions with the Board, the Editorial Advisory Committee, and interested individuals regarding who is featured in the magazine. While there is almost never a consensus on specific individuals to be covered, all of these various groups express a concern with fairness and the magazine's obligation to present a variety of work in order to document both new developments and the history of the field. In fact, the *Exhibition in Print*, now in its fourth year, was created to further this mission. The juried issue of the *EiP* was planned to be an opportunity to show new work by both recognized and not-yet-familiar metalsmiths. A significant component of the conversations concerning criteria and requirements was the idea that even famous and familiar craftspersons deserved the opportunity to have their *new* work seen and discussed. Thus, a decision was made to only reproduce work made in the last three years. In all of our planning this particular requirement was one of the few to garner unanimous agreement.

Recently however, several particularly sharp-eyed readers of the latest *EiP* have informed me that some works in the magazine had appeared in other publications prior to the execution cut-off date. The dates that these individuals furnished to the jury had quite obviously been changed from the original date of execution.

Now I do not consider myself particularly naive (I have been teaching long enough to have faced a number of evasions and creative and relative versions of the truth) but I am still dismayed by such egregiously unethical behavior. I realize that the opportunities for recognition in our field are rare and important to a metalsmith's success. I understand that a reproduction in a quality magazine can pad a resume, impress clients and patrons, carry weight with buyers, and count as points toward tenure and academic promotions. And to some people these benefits are evidently more valuable than integrity.

I have always admired an artist who believes in his/her production. I have seen such individuals schmooze, conjole, and wheedle, editors, curators, marketing reps, and clients to focus attention on their work. Sometimes, I may not find the work challenging, interesting, or even aesthetically pleasing but an honest and sincere promotion of a body of work deserves to be considered and the history of our field is composed of a number of different approaches. The history of our undertaking should not, however, depend on falsehoods.

What objects did the public miss seeing because some older work insinuated itself into the pages of the *EiP*? What person interested in a particular artist two or three years from now, will do a little research and discover that that artist seemed to exhibit absolutely no professional development between 1991 and 1996? What student, interested in a particular teacher, will find that that teacher had changed the dates on his/her work?

We are all familiar with occasional professional and ethical lapses. Certainly we must all show forbearance when a colleague makes an honest mistake. A writer just recently complained to me regarding an editing error; I was embarrassed and I added an item to my checklist to try and prevent such a mistake in the future. But this appears to be something more than a mistake.

I am sure that the percentile of individuals in our field who engage in such actions is extremely small and I am certainly not instructing readers in morality. But, maybe we need to find room in our community for dialogue, not judgement. Maybe the issue raises some questions about our ethical role in history and how we participate in writing that history. Such questions are much larger and much more important than a reproduction or two added to one's resume.

FCL

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Joe Wood
Brown Shell Brooch, 1988
brass, black plate, shell, nylon
2½ x 2½ x ¾"
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Above, left
Harlan Butt
copper, enamel, purple heart wood
Above, right
John J. Grant
tin, steel, thread, sterling silver
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Recent Sightings

Bruce Metcalf

A New Golden Age

One of the debatable inclusions in the recent *Metalsmith Exhibition in Print* was a pair of computer renderings by Margaret Yaukey. Of all the images in the *Exhibition in Print*, hers were the only ones that were not of objects; instead, they appeared to be color print-outs from her computer. As such, they were really not much more than well-crafted color renderings. The jurors wondered if Yaukey's images might be perceived as illegitimate.

I didn't find the images very controversial. What I did find interesting was her statement. Making a number of glowing claims Yaukey gives good PR for computer technologies. She says that computer-aided technologies: "...aid us in realizing ideas that we could not have realized otherwise and encourage us to conceive and create with a new freedom," which will soon generate a new "Golden Age in the Craft Community." Wow! A wonderful new era in which we will all be working with computer-aided design and fabrication!? That's quite a prediction.

This kind of rhetoric can be traced directly to Yaukey's teacher, Stanley Lechtzin. Lechtzin has been an advocate of computer-aided technologies for almost a decade now. His position was clearly stated in an interview with Michael Dunas that appeared in the Summer 1988 *Metalsmith*, where he made even more sweeping projections than Yaukey. Also in that interview, he went into considerably more detail, and one should take care to consider the assumptions that led to the conclusion he made.

For Lechtzin, computer-aided technologies will bring the artist closer to the realm of pure idea by eliminating handwork. Lechtzin states unequivocally that "the mark of the hand" is not crucial to the definition of metalsmithing, but that "the exercise of intellect, [and] the manifestation of form" are. In Lechtzin's view, physical labor is "somewhat onerous, *something to be avoided by intelligent people*." (The italics are mine.) Ultimately, he doesn't think that "direct contact with materials will have anything to do with the production of art." In Lechtzin's vision, physical work will be completely eliminated by computer-aided technologies, and our bodies will be reduced to becoming input devices for computer terminals.

I shouldn't have to point out that this view is founded on a profound contempt for handwork. In Lechtzin's vision, physical labor and handwork are troublesome burdens, to be made obsolete by whiz-bang technologies. Accordingly, *intelligent* people should share his disgust.

According to Lechtzin, art is about the exercise of intelligence and the dispensable aspect of craft is about the exercise of the body. Lechtzin's metaphysics elevate the mind to a position of superiority over the body, a version of the classical Western schism between mind and body. However, recent research into the nature of the mind suggests that Lechtzin is wrong.

In fact, the exercise of the body is a component of intelligence. Howard Gardner's 1985 book *Frames of Mind* describes a theory of multiple intelligences and he is able to discern six localities within the brain, each with specific tasks. There are linguistic intelligence and mathematical intelligence, but there is also what he calls bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. This body-oriented aspect of mind controls all types of muscular coordination: both the large motor skills we associate with dance and athletics; and the fine motor skills concomittant with the crafts. While Lechtzin elevates linguistic and mathematical intelligence to a position of honor and demotes bodily-kinesthetic intelligence to something shameful and low, the physical facts of the brain suggest that such a hierarchy is wholly fictional.

Furthermore, I believe most people get involved with crafts precisely *because* it is centered on physical labor and the skilled use of the body. Craft continues to be a viable pursuit *because* it emphasizes handwork. Over and over, I have watched students enter a craft studio with no experience in using their hands, and suddenly discover that the labor was powerfully resonant. Generations raised on television (and now on computers) discover the pleasures and potentials of living in their whole bodies, and exercising a part of their intelligences that had previously been dormant. As seductive as the computer might be, it cannot engage our whole mind, and it certainly doesn't encourage us to live in our whole body. Craft acts as an antidote to the increasing dematerialization we encounter in modern life. People recognize this intuitively and they value craft for this reason.

Lechtzin's – and Yaukey's – vision of the computerized future of craft rests on a flawed hierarchy that places mind over body. Most craftspeople, intuitively recognizing that handwork is a manifestation of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, find physical labor enjoyable. Some even find handwork crucial to the quality of their lives. They do not share Lechtzin's disgust, and they are not stupid. As a result, they will not be nearly so eager to replace their bodies with computer-aided technologies.

And then, there are other problems with Lechtzin's vision. What of the law of unintended consequences, of side effects never foreseen? What of the high capital costs for computers, software, and especially for computer-controlled machines? What of the predicted, but as yet unproven, economies for production jewelers?

I make a counter-prediction. Handwork will not die out. It will continue to attract people who find the disembodied nature of modern culture onerous, people who want to build a more holistic and balanced life. Craft will continue to synthesize body

Continued on page 8

Tuscano Rob Jackson, 1996
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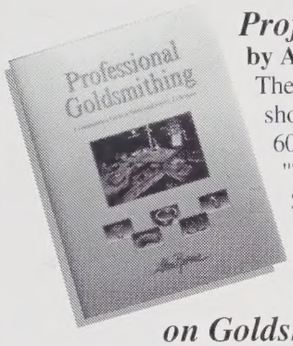

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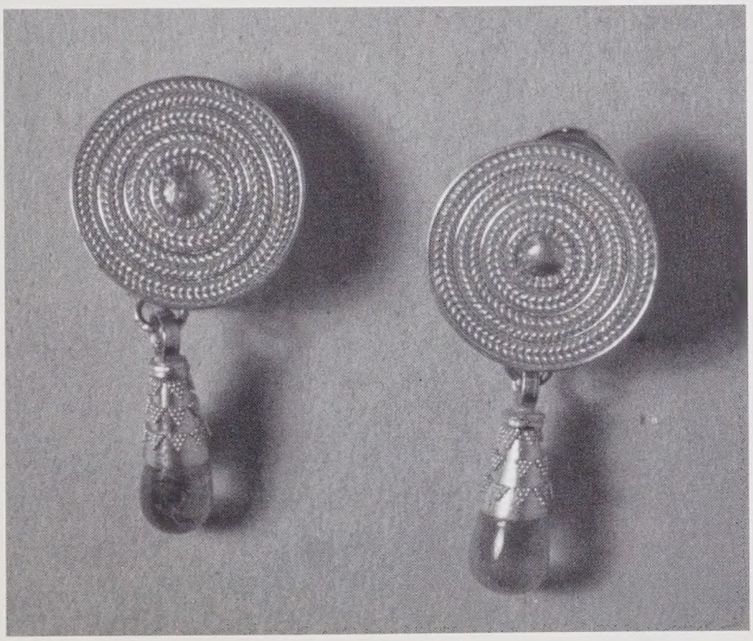

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RIGHT
Collard, 1995
gold, resin, rubber
(computer model rendering)
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FAR RIGHT
Batear, 1995
black delrin, brass
(computer model rendering)
4½ x 3½ x 1¼"

Continued from page 6

and mind, and its main outlet will be through the hand. Not the computer.

This is not to say that computers and their associated technologies are useless – they do many things that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. But the hand is an amazing instrument, too. Computerized simulations of the human hand are bulky, fabulously expensive, and require prodigious amounts of computing horsepower to run. (Even an ant makes the most powerful computer in the world look stupid.) In the end, Lechtzin's predictions about the abandonment of hand processes in art are nothing more than speculative science-fiction. The hand is here to stay.

Bruce Metcalf writes and makes jewelry in Philadelphia. He does his writing on a Power Macintosh 7200/75.

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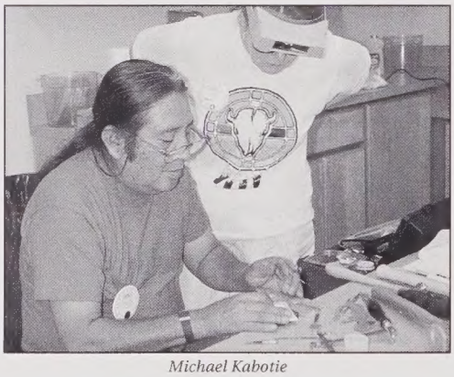

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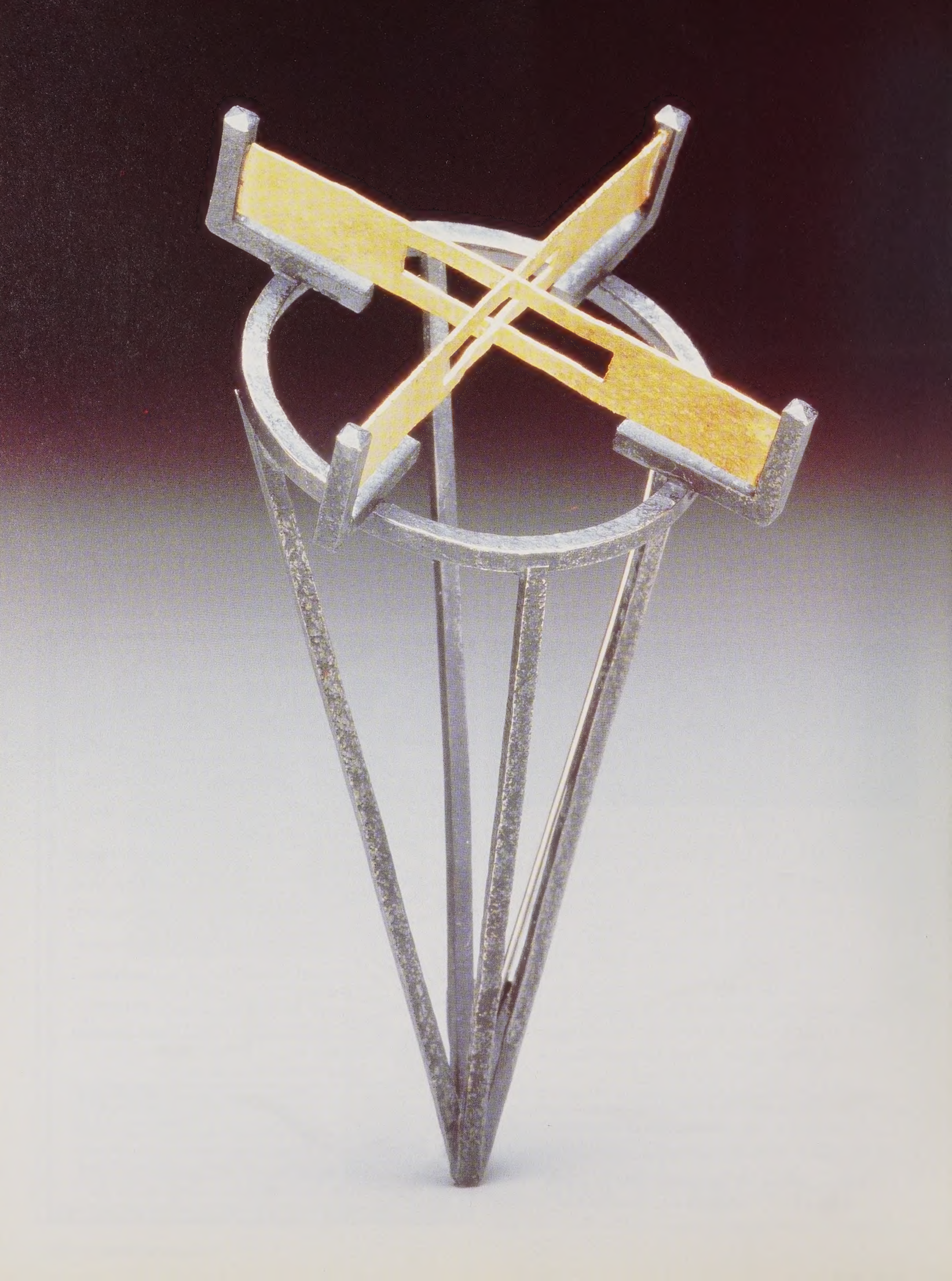


JOE WOOD

The Manifest idea

Text:
Patricia Harris and David Lyons

Joe Wood says he was first attracted to jewelry for its economy – the opportunity to focus a great deal of intensity in a small object. That is, he likes to make big statements in small forms. Wood's artistic impulse over the years has been primarily sculptural rather than ornamental, architectonic rather than organic. And yet ... "Right now I'm interested in the psychological reasons for ornament – the impulse to ornament," he says.

Wood has a restless mind. He graduated from SUNY Buffalo with a bachelor's degree in art education and design (with a concentration in jewelry). Dissatisfaction with production work sent him back to graduate school to earn an MFA at Kent State University in 1984. Since then his extremely varied body of work has followed two continuing threads: the exploration of abstract ideas embodied within objects and the manifestation of the inherent properties of his materials.

Concepts, he finds, present themselves, but not always in a fully formed fashion. For example, he relates, "I was driving down the road and saw a new way of making retaining walls by piling rocks inside chain link fence." He was intrigued by the juxtaposition of disordered loose material within a highly ordered structure. "The two were working together in a funny kind of way," he recalls. "I wanted to make something that was about that."

One of Wood's first pieces to deal with caged forms was *Black Halex Neckpiece*, 1986, a work he cites as a personal breakthrough. Black, painted ping-pong balls float freely within the steel frames, which are in turn hinged on black-plated brass T-connectors. The juxtaposition of the abstract spheres within the artifact of the frame creates a kind of tension between the ideal and human that is always present in Wood's work, though not often as explicitly.

This contrast of hard-soft or ideal-artifact is one of the most persistent themes in Wood's jewelry and other metal work. The 1987 *Reflective Brooch* contemporaneous with the caged work but involving a different approach to composition dramatizes the tension between two materials (oxidized steel and 14k gold) rather than two forms.

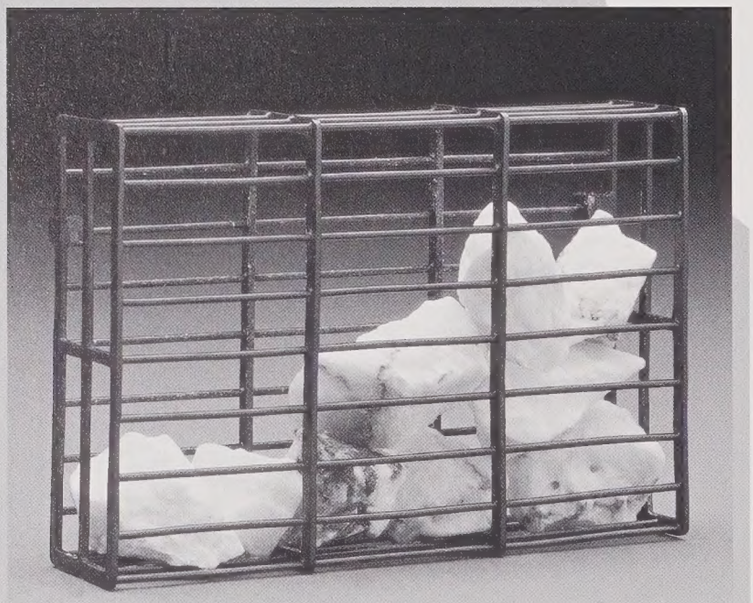
Long Cage Brooch and *Square Cage Brooch*, both 1988, demonstrate Wood's further exploration of the explicit metal cages (both contain alabaster chips that stand in for natural rock) as they relate to states of being and becoming. The strongly vertical, tapering structure of *Long Cage* emphasizes the binding forces of gravity and friction: compressed into the base of the cage, the rocks are immobilized. Despite their unformed appearance, they are contracted into stasis by the restriction of the cage. The structure of *Square Cage*, however, permits lateral movement, allowing for random rearrangement within limits imposed by the cage.

Moment #2, 1990
sterling silver, 18k
3 x 1¼ x 1"

During this same period, Wood began to introduce cordage, usually nylon threads, into his pieces. *Brown Shell Brooch*, 1988, brings together a number of his technical and compositional fascinations with a shell inside a cage inside a round form: displaced natural material, cage, and radial symmetry.

Right
Long Cage Brooch, 1988
brass, steel, black plate, alabaster chips
5½ x 2 x ¾"

Left, below
Square Cage Brooch, 1988
steel, brass, black nickel plate, alabaster chips
2 x 3 x ¾"



"I'm drawn to hypnotic imagery, especially centrally located fixed-point images," Wood says. The beauty of such images, he believes, is that they are not illustrative or allegorical – they're simply focal points from which formal relationships emerge. In the case of *Brown Shell Brooch*, it takes a moment to realize that the front and back of the cage holding the shell are not composed of metal bars but of black string, an antithesis of the imprisoning strength and rigidity of metal. Same form – different properties.

In subsequent pieces using nylon string in lieu of metal bars, Wood begins to dissolve the physical imprisonment of the cage into purified, abstract lines of force. *Suspended Rock Brooch* employs nested circular forms with a rock suspended in the center on string that literally holds the entire piece together. The effect is of floating parts, with the string as a physical reminder of the force vectors that would stabilize such a system.

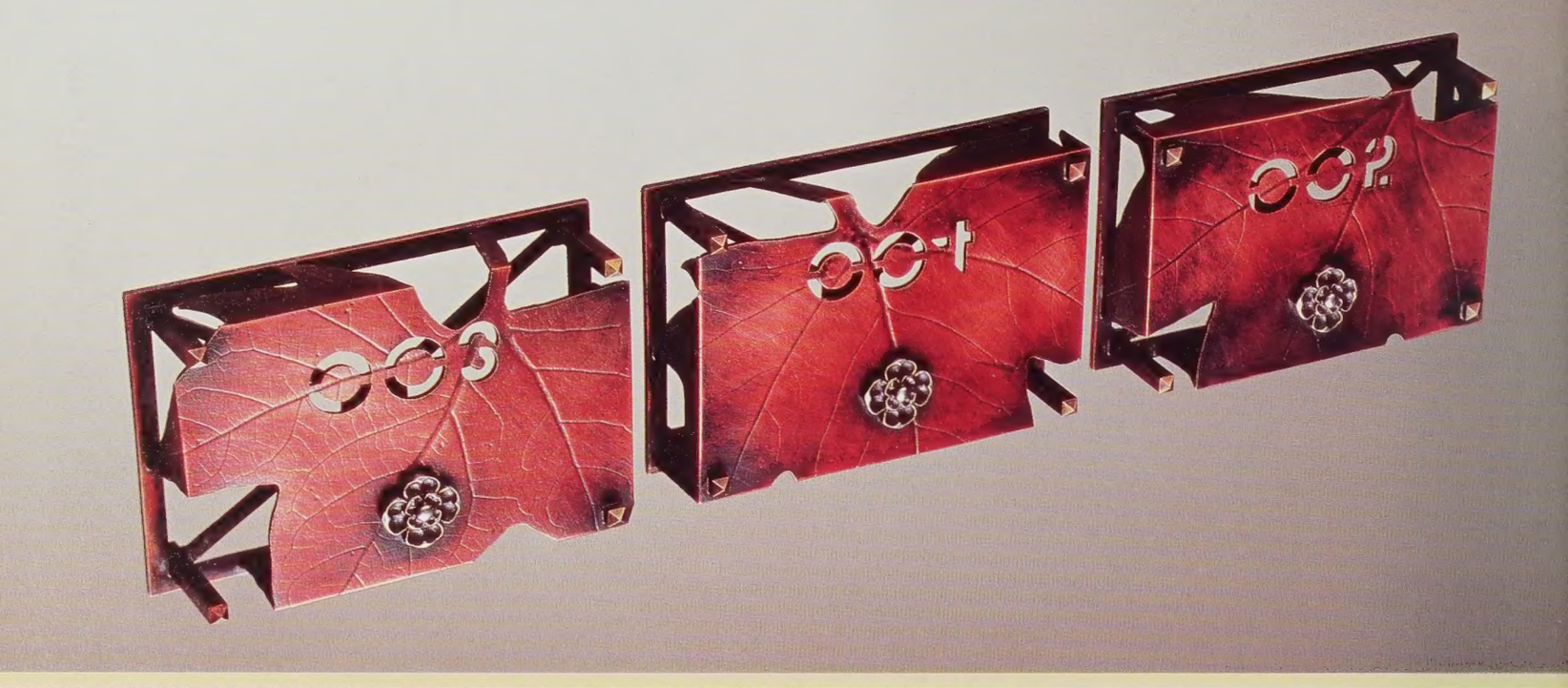
By the time Wood reached *Stem Grill*, 1989, the strings were demoted to sketches, perhaps because his primary interest had shifted to the properties of materials. This Fortunoff bowl of steel and sterling silver was the first piece in which Wood used a burned oil patina.

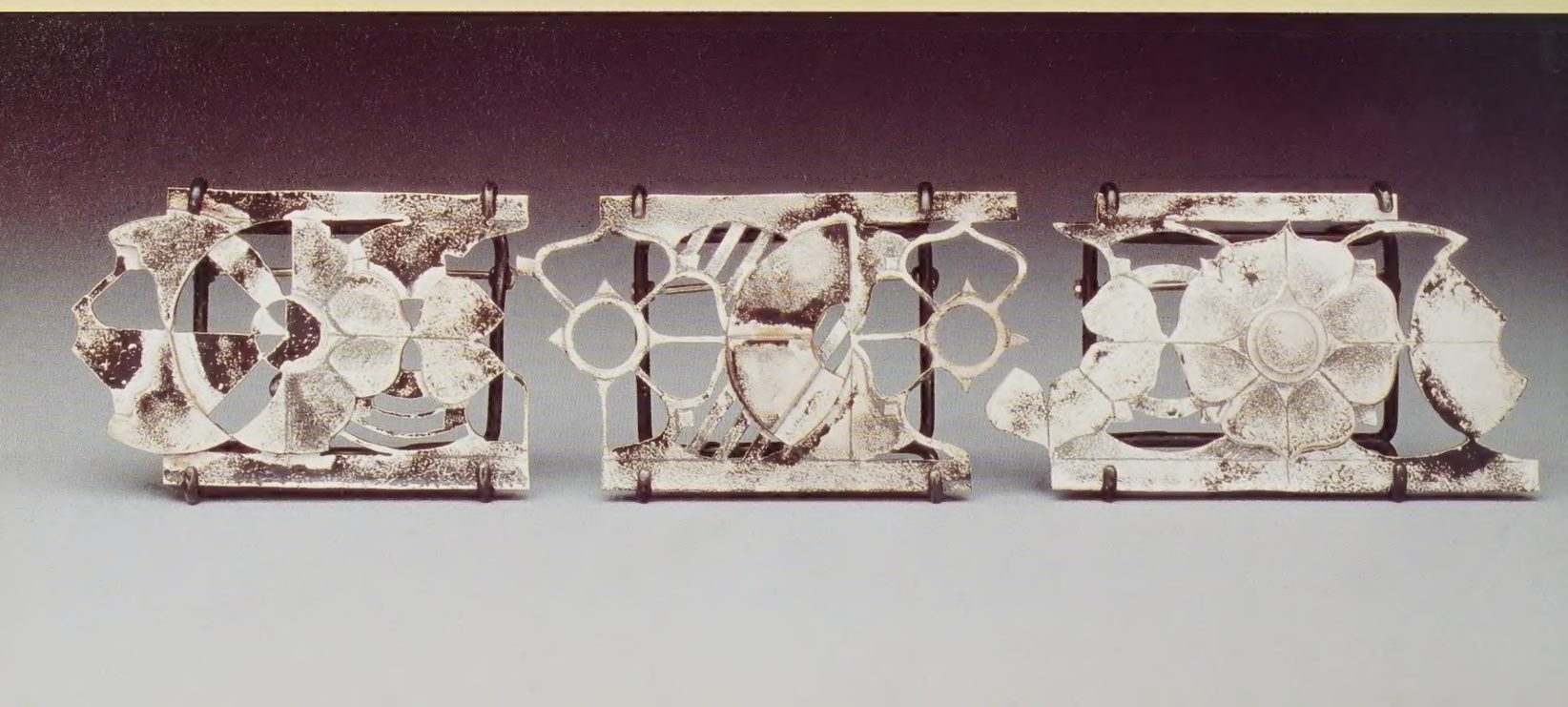
"I wanted to do something where silver does what silver does best on its own – takes a mark and gets stained," Wood explains. "I had used black plating on the metal to get a saturated color, but it was unsatisfactory because it had no character."

Wood began experimenting with smoked and burned oils, discovering that he could achieve the effects he sought by coating the metal lightly with oil and heating it in a furnace or with a torch to temperatures from 700 to 900 degrees. To get even coverage the metal needed to have "a real tooth to it." So he took a piece of granite and struck it against his bench hammer to mar the hammer face, then used the hammer to texture his metal. "It gives a tooth to hold the oil and gives the metal an ambiguous age," he says.

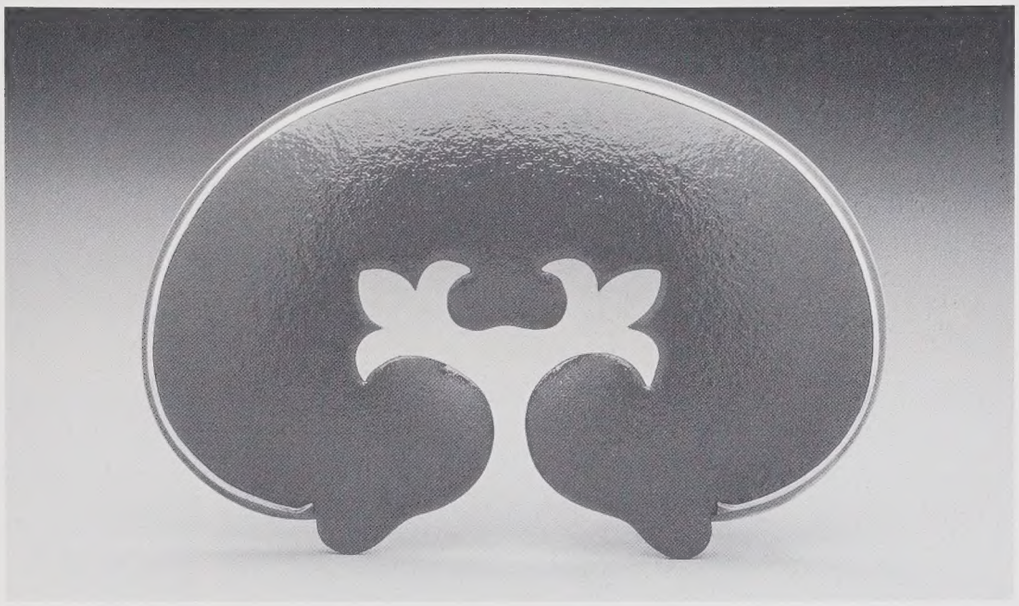
Wood learned that different oils have different properties. For most of his work he favors linseed oil for its tendency to pull apart into vein-like structures. He also uses olive oil. "As I experimented with the oils I discovered that under the right circumstances, I could achieve an effect like paper. That led me to thinking about drawing."

Indeed, Wood called his next body of work the *Drawing Series*. The simple geometric projections drawn on the metal with carbon "look just like textbook drawings on white paper," he says. "They deal with relationships between centers, the locus of points, how a circle is inscribed." The brooch *Reach*, 1989, illustrates his basic approach. Lines drawn on three overlapping circular plates of silver define the rhythmic and dramatic relationships of forms. The smoked oil patina creates a parchment effect on the surface and Wood enhances the drawn geometry by removing a portion of an arc – a physical manifestation of boundaries imposed by an abstract line.





Right
Red Floret #2, 1995
enamel on copper, sterling
2¼ x 3¼ x ½"



Left, top to bottom

November Campaign Series, 1992
copper, brass, bronze, sterling
2 x 3 x ¾" (each)

Penannular Ring Series, 1992
sterling silver, 18k

Samples #1, 2, 3, 1995
sterling silver, burned oil, graphite
1½ x 2 x ½" (each)

Wood notes that many who had championed his earlier work found the *Drawing Series* perplexing, perhaps because his signature objects (shell, rock, and thread) were absent. But Wood doesn't believe in consciously trying to develop a recognizable style. "If you're going to pursue ideas, you have to vary your material, vary what your directions are," he shrugs. "Maybe in thirty years you can look back and see a continuity...." Continuity in Joe Wood's work lies less in the resemblance one series of work may have to another and more in the permutations of his struggles to elucidate the abstract with the tangible.

Given Wood's propensity for construction, it is unsurprising that he followed the austere and abstract *Drawing Series* with a return to the solidity of three-dimensional composition. The sterling and gold pieces of the *Moment Series*, 1990, demonstrate a continuing geometric concern, but one that involves the intersection of one-, two-, and three-dimensional space. Each silver cone defines volume on its open end and a single point at its tip. The gold crosspieces, rendered as if they were two-dimensional, vary in the placement of their central cutouts to define a point at the mouth of the vortex.

But even as he pursued these geometric concerns, Wood was pondering his personal attraction to architectural ornament. "I've always been drawn to the rosette, especially the smallish ones you see over windows or doorways in the Boston area," he says.

His exploration of the significance of ornament began with a series he calls *Penannular Ring*. Attached to the breaks in the circumference of the rings are gold ornamental devices. At the same time, Wood integrated rosettes of varying degrees of abstraction into brooches such as *Drift*, 1992, that also combined his fascination with surface and the drama of geometric definition. Hints of his earlier cages also persist in the bars that define top and bottom.

But consideration of the rosette and other architectural ornament, particularly the Victorian decorations so common in Boston, where Wood is an associate professor at the Massachusetts College of Art, led him to nineteenth century designers, who had looked to the natural world for forms. "I became very enamored of the nineteenth century positivism that says we can make an idealized form of nature in our own work," he says.

That interest became explicit in *November Campaign Series*, 1992, where leaf forms are inset with abstract rosettes. Perhaps as a way to emphasize the human hand, which can produce infinite repetitions of a form, he cuts out a sequence of numbers (003, 004, 005, etc.) in each brooch. The cold objectification of a manufactured object neatly dampens the romanticization of the natural form.

Logically enough, producing in a series led Wood to consider the ramifications of the series in an architectural sense – as a frieze. Two groups from 1995, *Scallop Brooches* and *Samples* pick up the frieze theme and the secondary meaning of series: the progression of time.

Reflective Brooch, 1987
steel, 14k
2½ x 2½ x ¾"

The three brooches called *Samples* were executed as part of a large exhibition in which artists from various media were invited to contribute their interpretations of the fiber sampler tradition. Wood's designs draw from sampler motifs, but they have been partially deconstructed as if the cloth had decayed. (The smoked oil patina furthers the effect of apparent oxidation.) Says Wood, "The idea of using silver's properties to acknowledge the passage of time was important to me. It provided a way to dissolve sentiment."

Another approach to detaching image from sentiment is to appropriate forms that have lost their emotional specificity over time. Wood did this in his most extreme exploration of ornament, a group of intensely colored enameled pieces made in 1994 and 1995 that are modeled loosely on medieval ornament. Seemingly a radical departure from the constructed nature of his earlier work, they are, in fact, a schematized extension of forms with which he has been working for several years. For example, the cutout portions from *Scarlet Series*, 1994, have appeared in variations going back at least to 1989, more variations on the rosette. *Red Floret #2*, 1995, recapitulates both the trefoil and, as the name suggests, the form of a blossom.

Essentially monochromatic and convex in a gently pillowed fashion, these pieces play neatly with positive and negative space, harking back in spirit if not in form to the *Drawing Series*, while achieving an essentially heraldic effect. Although Wood was "extremely picky" about the colors, he was more concerned with cultivating a stippled surface for the glossy enamel. "I wanted to freeze the idea of crystals melting and fusing together," he says. So he has experimented with time and temperature to find the point at which the individual granules of color have not quite become a single smooth surface.

The desire to incorporate the properties of his materials as an essential element in the finished work is characteristic of Wood. "When material is integrated into an application," he explains, "it connects the object to the world. It becomes an object that is a material that is an object."

Right, clockwise from upper left

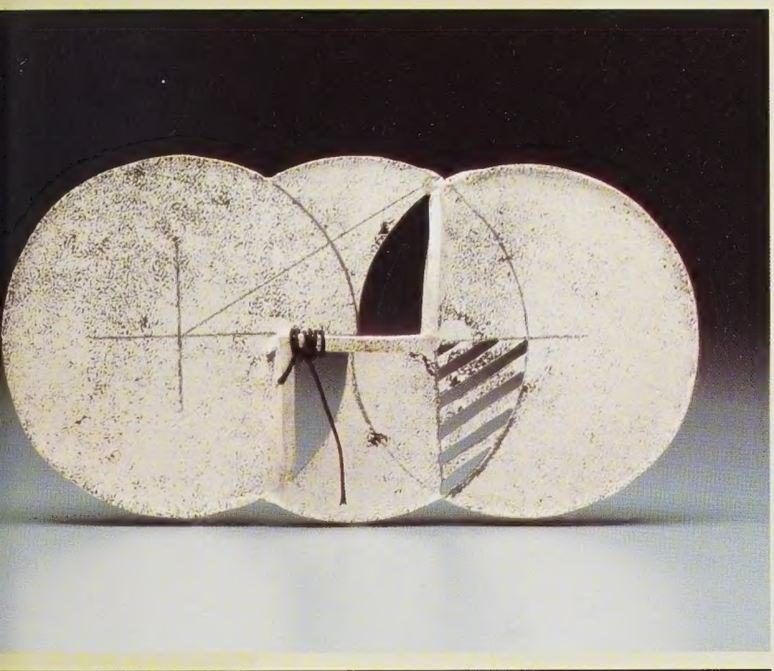
Drawing Series: Brooch, Reach, 1989
sterling, smoked oil patina, graphite, nylon
1½ x 3 x 1/2"

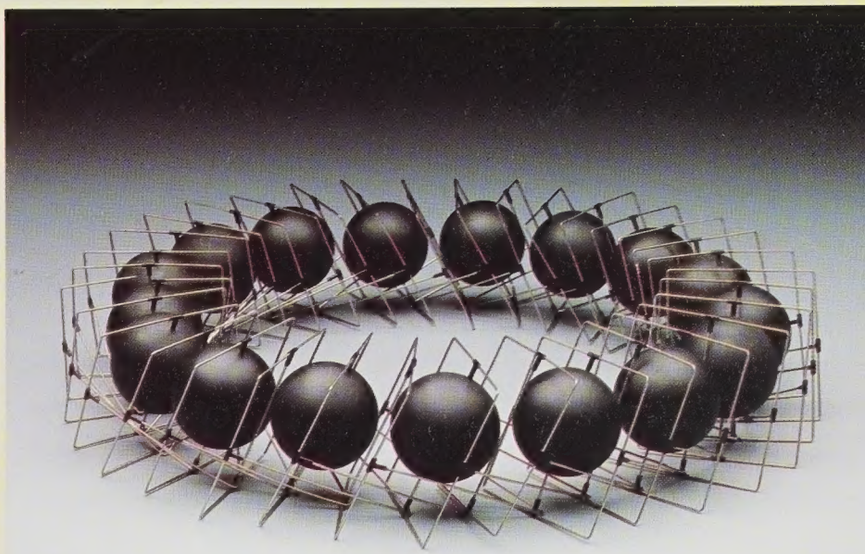
Black Halex Neckpiece, 1986
plastic, steel, black plated brass
15"

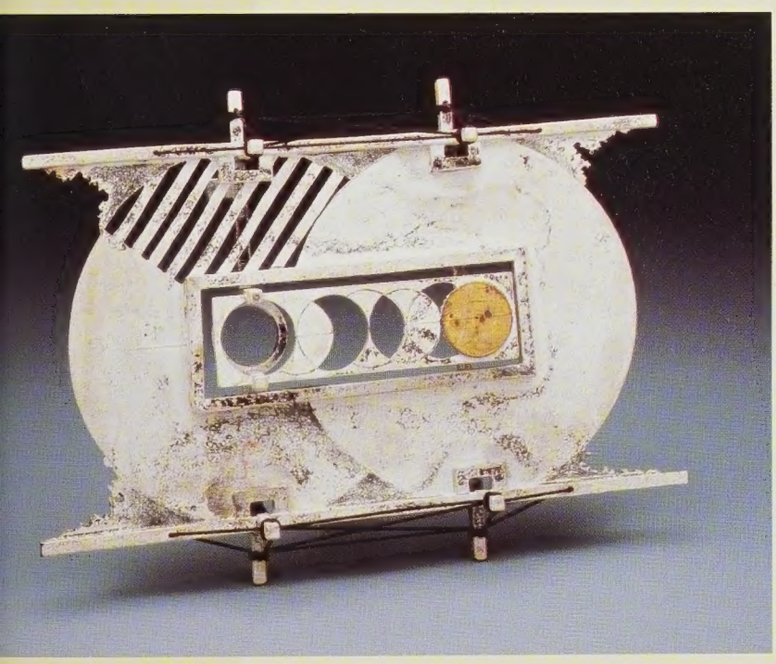
Stem Grill, (Fortunoff Bowl), 1989
sterling, steel, nylon
3 x 13 x 13"

Drift, 1992
sterling, burned oil, gold, nylon
2¼ x 4 x ½"

Patricia Harris and David Lyons are writers who reside in Cambridge, MA.
All photographs by Dean Powell







SANDRA SHERMAN

TEXT BY BRUCE METCALF

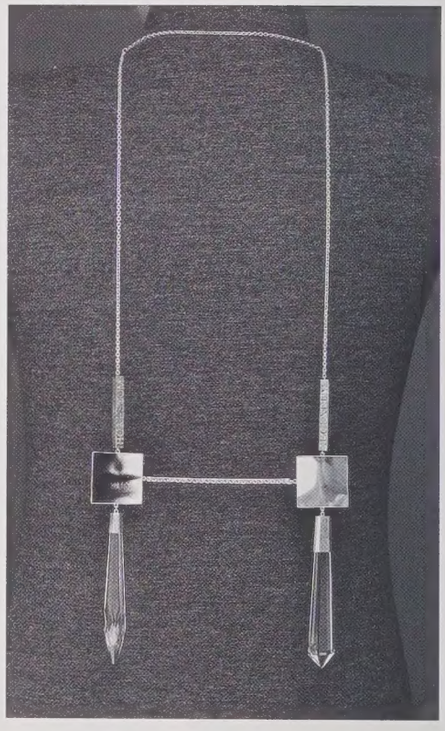
It has been decades since jewelers have started claiming they were artists, but the long legacy of craft-as-design continues to have a profound effect on American studio jewelry. Even today, the work produced by jewelry-stars like Mary Lee Hu and Thomas Gentille are abstract forms made to accommodate the body: a decorative offshoot of modernist design and abstract painting. While art has continued to pursue other agendas like fey references to pop culture, critical examinations of the way mass-media insinuates itself into thought, or the unstable relations between Western power and many other cultures, studio jewelry has continued blithely along the path of pure design.

That is, until recently. A new generation of studio jewelers, mostly in their 20s and 30s, have taken the claim that jewelry can be art a lot more seriously than their elders. Instead of looking to design for cues, they look to the history of recent art. Of course, that attitude is often laced with denial. Sometimes the status of art seems so much more desirable that the status of mere craft, that the slightest hint of utility or craft history is eliminated. But there are others who look to both craft and art at the same time, creating objects that are undeniably craft and undeniably informed by a conceptual agenda. One of this new generation is Sandra Sherman.

Sherman received her first training at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, where she earned a dual major in painting and jewelry. After leaving school she worked for local Philadelphia jewelers and then produced a line of marketable jewelry for several years. In 1984 she moved to Germany. She later enrolled at the Akademie der Bildenden Künst in Munich, where Hermann Jünger was concluding his teaching career. While a student in Germany, Sherman produced three series of bracelets based on chain mail, hinges, and fringes. Each of these series consisted of interlocked systems of moveable elements, which could change shape when worn.

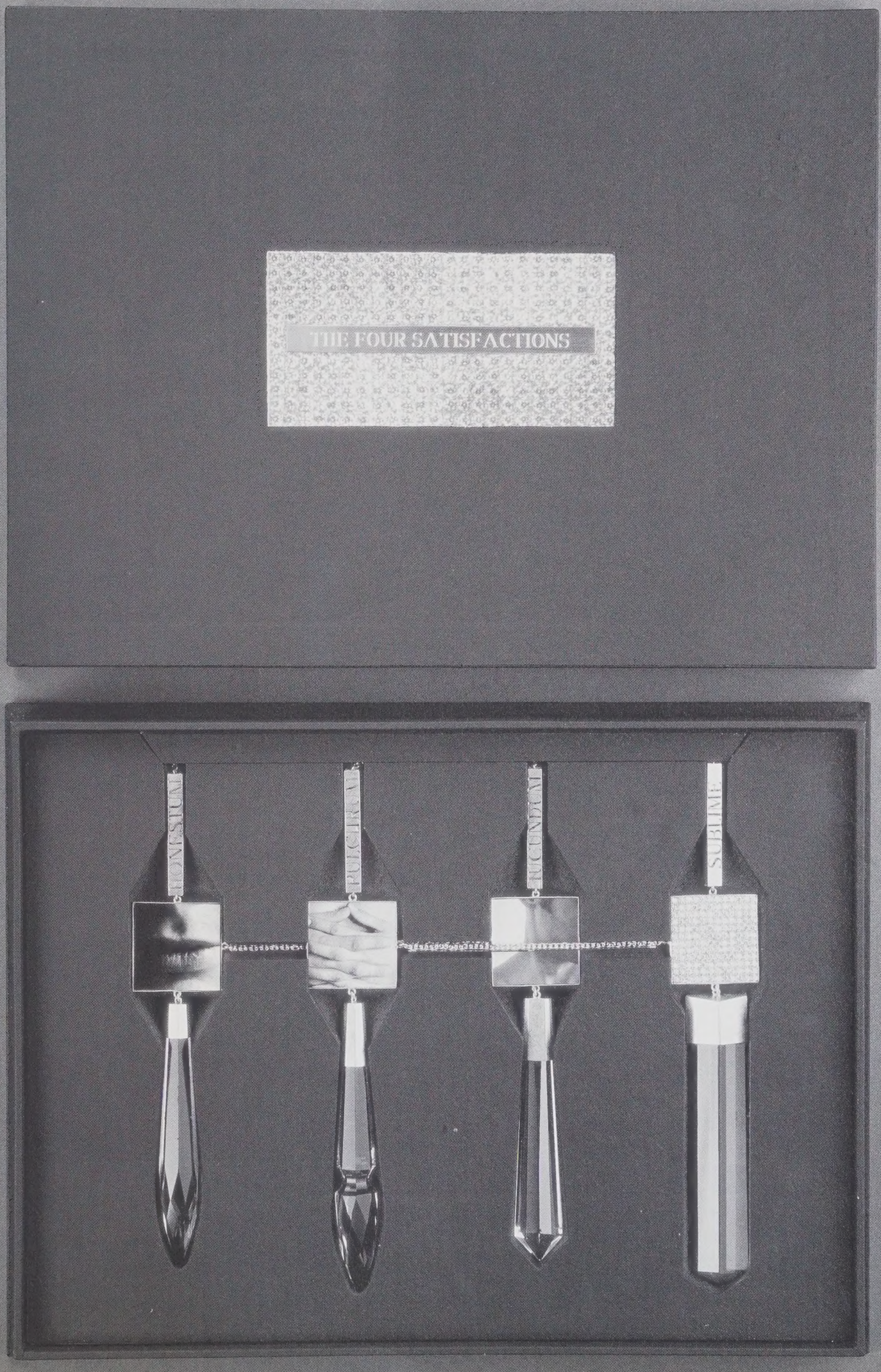
By this time, most of her core attitudes were formed. She admits to having a loyalty to the idea of making jewelry (she calls herself an "addicted jeweler," as opposed to being committed), and she has clear ideas as to the limits of what can reasonably be called jewelry. "It's important to me that a piece be wearable. ... It's fine if a piece is a little bit demanding and you can't wear it to work in a garden. But when the format puts the piece in danger, or it's seriously uncomfortable, then I think it's demanding too much."[1]

Here, Sherman is referring to the experiments of the early 1980s, when some jewelers expanded the scale of jewelry far beyond the bounds of reasonable use. While Sherman is not making a value judgment, she refuses to expand the size of her jewelry to demonstrate that it must be *art*. She says that objects that make reference to jewelry, but that are not intended to be worn, are not truly jewelry. For Sherman, such items could be costumes or performances, but they are not jewelry in any meaningful way.



RIGHT
The Four Satisfactions,
diptych necklace and box, 1992-1994
sterling silver, photographs,
cubic zirconia, glass chandelier
pendants, mixed-media box
16 x 6½"

ABOVE
The Four Satisfactions, back view


THE FOUR SATISFACTIONS
IUCUNDUM
PULCHRUM
IUCUNDUM
SUBLIME

Until her graduation from the Akademie der Bildenden Künst in 1990, her jewelry was very much in the Modernist German tradition. Although her work was expensive and labor-intensive, it was still colored by the problems of marketplace-oriented jewelry. Her work was comfortably wearable and often produced as multiples. Formalist design considerations were important to her, along with a strong sense of the goldsmith's tradition. Ethnic references and historical references were also encouraged by her teachers and colleagues in Germany, but any specific emotional content was ignored. Looking back on the chain-mail, fringe, and hinge series, Sherman now thinks they were oriented almost entirely toward design, by which she means a depersonalized problem-solving process.

At the end of her studies, the German jeweler Manfred Bischoff gave her a very positive critique. Afterwards, she asked him if there was anything he could add. He responded that she could take more risks. At first, she was confused by his comment. But at about the same time, another event transpired that forced her to reevaluate her whole approach to art, craft, and design. This event was the death of her father. Experiencing this loss made her aware of her emotional responses to things that she had previously dismissed or minimalized, and she began to think about recognizing and expressing her emotional life. Her artwork could be the start of a process of "...making yourself more vulnerable by being open about your emotional response to your world, being more public about it. I was interested in making things that had meaning in addition to decorative value or formal attributes. Maybe you could take more risks. [Risk] could be personal risk in revealing more of yourself, or making something that doesn't appeal to quite so many people."[2]

So, instead of placing good design and wearability at the highest priority, as most designers would, she placed formal composition and utility in the service of expression. In Munich, this is still unusual, to say the least. While Bischoff has pioneered the insertion of personal content into jewelry, most of the German goldsmithing community remains reluctant to confront it. For Sherman, however, the freedom to refer to her personal experiences was liberating.

While incorporating emotional content into jewelry is common to most American-educated jewelers, Sherman's long experience with Teutonic formalism gives her work a distinct twist. The German influence is still apparent, because the emotional content is very restrained. What makes this work interesting is the way her subject matter is so thoroughly merged into the strict limitations of the jewelry object. She uses jewelry to make sly observations about gender stereotypes, about emotional balance (or imbalance), and about the way emotions are manifested in personalities.

A typical necklace is *Venus and Cupid* (alternately *Mothers and Sons*, 1991-1994). Sherman calls it a diptych, in that it consists of two pendants that hang both in front and in back. Venus is represented by a fragment of a Baroque chandelier crystal and five glassed-in scrolls filled with blue crushed glass, all hanging from a handmade chain. The chain terminates with Cupid, a phallic crystal dangling from a pair of chased silver wings. Cupid also has five glassed-in segments, but each contains a watch hand representing his arrows. For those who look close enough – and Sherman suspects they are few – one of the arrows is black, which is Cupid's iron arrow of hate.

So, what is going on here? In calling the piece a diptych, Sherman is (somewhat sarcastically) making reference to a time-honored type of painting. At the same time, the gender division between male and female is vividly represented by the two sides of the necklace, which eloquently uses a physical fact of jewelry to carry meaning. Things are further complicated by the fact that when the necklace is worn the wearer is caught between male and female. Sherman questions the ordinary way of categorizing the world into binary oppositions, in which one must be either A or B, but not some inclusive in-between.

Venus and Cupid is presented in a handmade box. The box, of course, is a traditional device to present expensive jewelry, but Sherman uses it for other reasons. First, the box allows her to extend the metaphor of the jewelry; here, the box displays a reproduction of a painting of Venus and Cupid. The viewer can thus connect the wings on Cupid with the detached wings of the jewelry, and so on. The box also reinforces the objectness of the jewelry, stressing that it is a three-dimensional thing with weight and volume. And, in practical terms, the presentation box gives the jewelry a site off the body, instead of being tossed into a cluttered jewelry chest.

ABOVE, ABOVE RIGHT
Armor and Amour, two pendants and box, 1995

BELOW RIGHT
Venus and Cupid, diptych necklace and box, 1991-1994
fine silver, sterling silver, 24k gold clad bronze, pearls, glass, watch hands, glass chandelier pendant, mixed-media box
16 x 8½"

Armor and Amor

Venus and Cupid
1991 - 2

Another recent necklace is *Means of Orientation*, 1991, in which a heart-shaped beach stone, a tiny compass, and another phallic glass crystal all hang from a silver chain encrusted with blue beads. (This one must have some connection with romance gone bad, because an alternate title is *Directionless Little Boys.*) Sherman sees the three images in the pendant as an index of the psyche: the pebble as the heart – a heart of stone? – the compass as the head, evidently a bit atrophied, and the crystal as libidinous sexuality. Since the crystal is the largest element by far, the pendant could easily be read as a critique of male cluelessness.

These two ensembles demonstrate Sherman's ambition to make truly comprehensive jewelry. She speaks of her aspirations in terms of the three German jewelers she admires most: Manfred Bischoff, Otto Kunzli, and Daniel Kruger. Following the model of Bischoff, she wants to invest her jewelry with a powerful emotional content. Emulating Kunzli, she wants to address the conceptual aspect of art, where the artwork is an idea made tangible. And, as with Kruger, she wants to make jewelry that is deeply sensuous, engaging more than vision alone. Sherman hopes to make jewelry that combines all three aspects: personal emotion, careful thought, and a seductive experience of the object. To her, each of the German jewelers specialize in one aspect, at the expense of the others: Kunzli's intellectualism crowds out both the emotive level and sensual appeal, and so on.

While Sherman is hesitant to criticize these three outstanding jewelers, her ambition is more inclusive than theirs. She wants to merge apparent opposites. Sherman desires both/and instead of either/or.

The Munich art scene is very intellectual. Sherman notes the penchant her German colleagues have for engaging in complex philosophical arguments and for quoting philosophers to lend credibility to their artwork. Her response to the Munich art world culture is *The Four Satisfactions.* The iconography relates to a passage from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, one of the favorite texts of aspiring Munich art-philosophers. In the book, Kant enumerates the four kinds of aesthetic satisfaction: the pleasant; the good; the beautiful; and the sublime. Sherman recalls reading the passage with an American friend: while the poor philosophy student dutifully slogged through the text, Sherman cracked jokes and free-associated. *The Four Satisfactions* was the ultimate result.

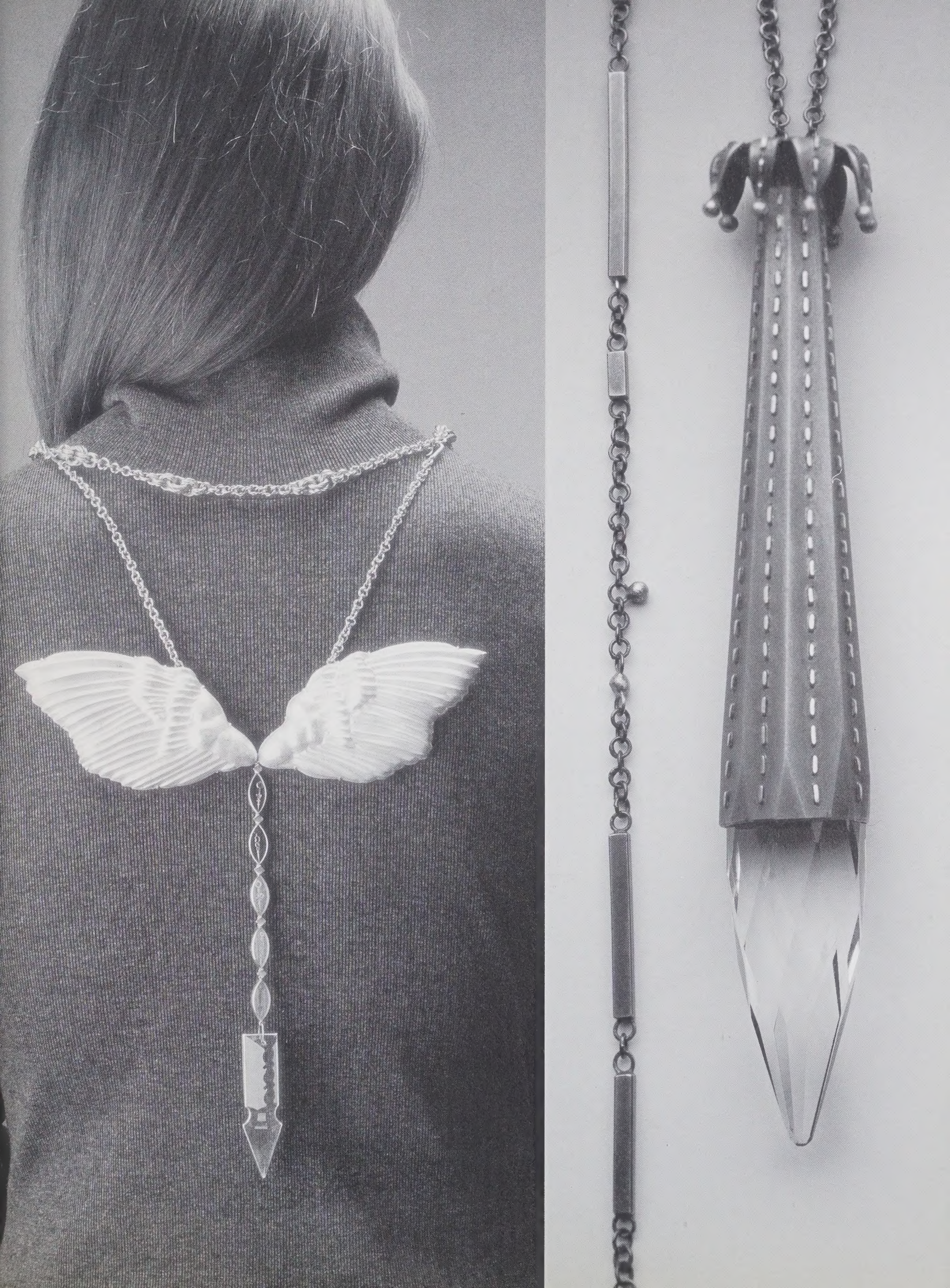
It is something like a harness, a rectangle of chain with square frames and crystal pendants at each corner. The piece drapes over the body, so two of the photo/pendant combinations appear on the front and two appear on the back. Each square has an image that corresponds to one of Kant's satisfactions: the pleasant is a photograph of the curve of a man's neck and shoulder; the good is a mouth; the beautiful is a pair of hands; and the sublime (which Kant claimed could not be apprehended) is 144 pavé-set cubic zirconia. The appropriate passage from Kant appears on the back of each square, and each is titled in Latin and English. The whole thing fits into a presentation case.

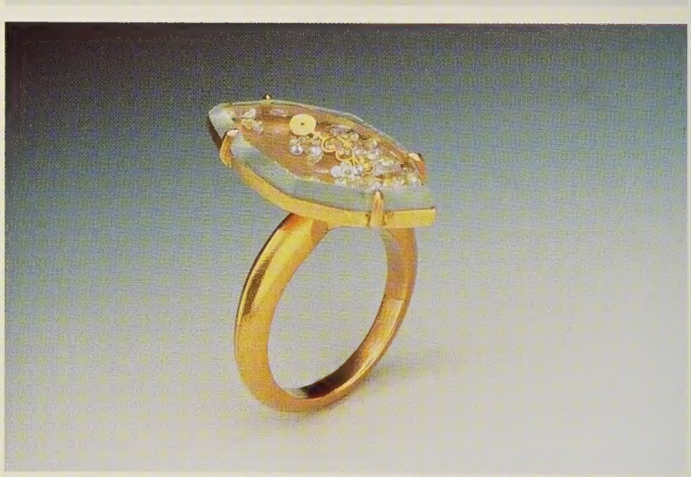
The Four Satisfactions shows Sherman at play in the field of conceptual jewelry. It is wearable, and part of it is very much within the conservative tradition of precious jewelry (the pavé-set stones). It exploits two of the prime signifiers of recent advanced art: text and photographs. It refers directly to one of the most important works in Western aesthetics, but more as a satire than as a ploy to give the piece conceptual weight. Everything is skewed. To employ artificial gems as a metaphor for the sublime is pretty funny, if you think about it. In fact, to represent Kant's aesthetic satisfactions as parts of the male body is humorous – and a little subversive, too. Where Kant probably thought of female flesh as embodying the pleasant, Sherman substitutes a man – pointing out that turnabout is fair play. And then, there's the phallic shape of the crystal pendants, as if Sherman is slyly remarking that Kant's whole business of categorization is just another man thing.

In 1994 Sherman moved back to the United States. She has moved away from large pieces like *The Four Satisfactions* for several reasons. First, the really complex pieces often take several years to complete – not just because they are technically difficult, but also because Sherman takes a long time to make decisions. Some works went through several versions before she was satisfied, and she no longer can afford this luxury. Also, she wants to be more succinct these days, to "say one thing instead of five."[3]

FAR RIGHT
Armor and Amour,
detail of pendant, 1995

RIGHT
Venus and Cupid,
back view as worn, 1991-1994





ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM

Rings of Engagement #I, 1996
24k on 925 ag, compass needle

Mourning Ring, 1996
925 ag, glass, watch hand

Rings of Engagement #VIII, 1996
18k, palladium silver, glass, compass needle

ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM

Rings of Engagement #II, 1996
24k on 925 ag, glass, sand

Balance, 1996
18k, level

Rings of Engagement #VII, 1996
18k, c2, glass, watch hand

Means of Orientation,
necklace and box, 1991
sterling silver, glass beads,
compass, beach stone,
glass chandelier pendant,
mixed-media box
16" long

Armor and Amour is typical of her newer work. It's simpler than the earlier front-and-back necklaces: now it's a matched *his & her* set of two pendants. But like many of her works, it starts with a play of words and an implicit reference to classical literature. Here it is male and female, self-protection and openness, war and love, Mars and Venus. One pendant is female: pink stones massed in a constructed setting with gold prongs; the other is a (male) faceted silver pendant. The details deepen and skew the reading. Instead of being set conventionally, most of the pink stones are set upside down, point-side out, turning all that preciousness into something altogether more aggressive. The male pendant is very carefully pinstriped, as in the uniform of the successful corporate man, but there's also a peculiar serrated collar with gold beads – something like the costume of the courtly fool. The chain is different for each pendant: the male is composed of sturdy bars linked by fragile jump rings; while the female is very fine, but interrupted here and there by knots, often in gold.

Triple Hinged Bracelet, 1988
patinated brass
compressed: 2½ x 4"
extended: 5½ x 3½"

Each of these elements is symbolic. But to decode *Armor and Amour* is no straightforward matter. If we conform to standard gender stereotyping, we read the male pendant as the armor and the pink and gold female pendant is lovely. But this reading isn't stable – the male part is clearly phallic, signifying carnal love. But so is the female pendant and the jagged stones could easily be seen as armor. Both pendants are intended to be equally attractive and defensive. So, who's male and who's female here? Sherman seems to be saying that roles and genders are all very complicated and messy, very much like real life.

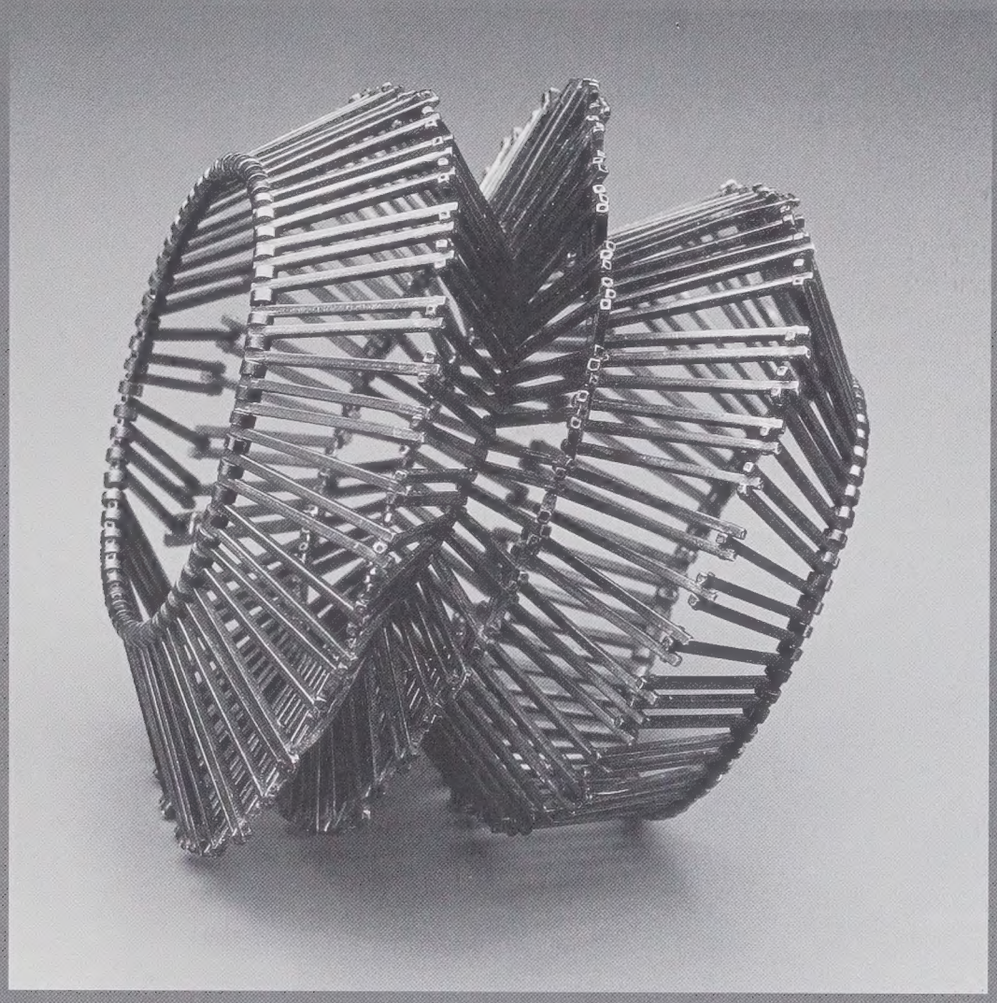
Lately Sherman has been working on a series of rings, more simple and more stripped-down than anything she has designed since she was a student in Munich. Each ring follows the format of the traditional solitaire: the form of a faceted gem on top of a tapered shank. But in this case the gem forms are metal constructions, usually containing an object that relates to the imagery Sherman has used in earlier pendants. One ring has a compass set inside the faux stone; one has a golden watch hand; another has a spirit level with a cross-hair fixed above it. In each of these rings, something moves, responding to the movements of the wearer. The most perverse of the rings has a compass mounted inside the form of a round stone, but the stone is joined to the shank with a ball-and-socket. It constantly flops around, frustrating attempts to get one's bearings. As a means of orientation, it holds out the hope of functioning, while remaining amusingly useless. And as pure jewelry, it's as wearable and elegant as the prototype solitaire ring, but without the usual associations of true and constant love. This is a ring for people who understand that relationships are mutable and direction is hard to find.

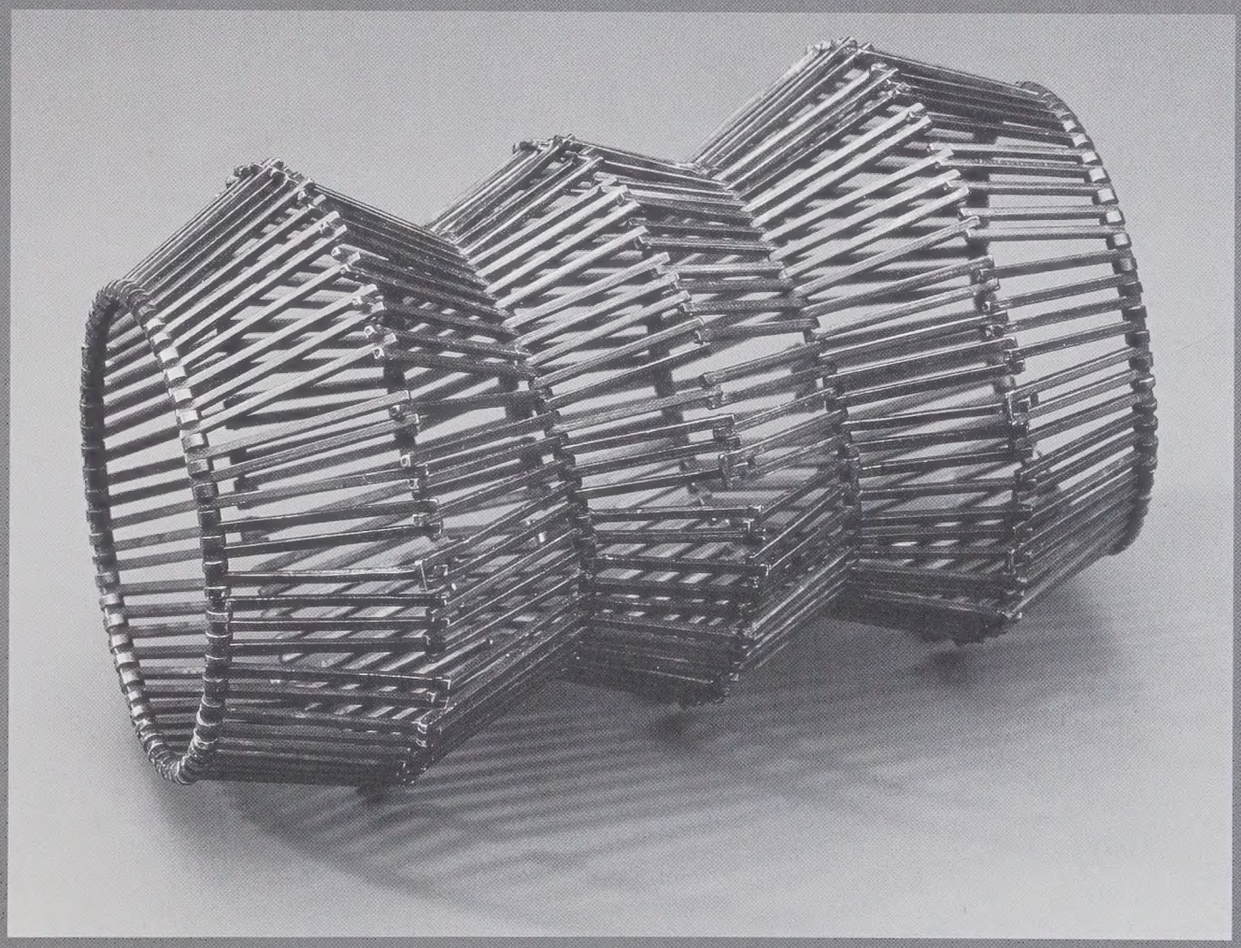
Like all of Sherman's recent work, these rings are intimately connected to both traditional craft and contemporary art. They are beautifully made, testifying to Sherman's long experience in the jewelry trade. They look to tradition for their format and their overall shape, as well as for their rich palette of associations. But, instead of remaining confi fined within those craft usages, the rings also rely on the invention, emotional ambiguity, and conceptual play that characterizes advanced art. Where the diamond solitaire has a single and stable meaning, Sherman's rings symbolize a world where things have more than one meaning and where those meanings are often diametrically opposed. Like any good artist, Sherman examines this world with wit, intelligence, and some hard-won wisdom. And, like most people who try to come to terms with the ambiguity of modern life instead of wishing it would just go away, Sherman tries to fold contradictions into a new unity.

Bruce Metcalf is a studio jeweler and writer who lives in Philadelphia.

Notes

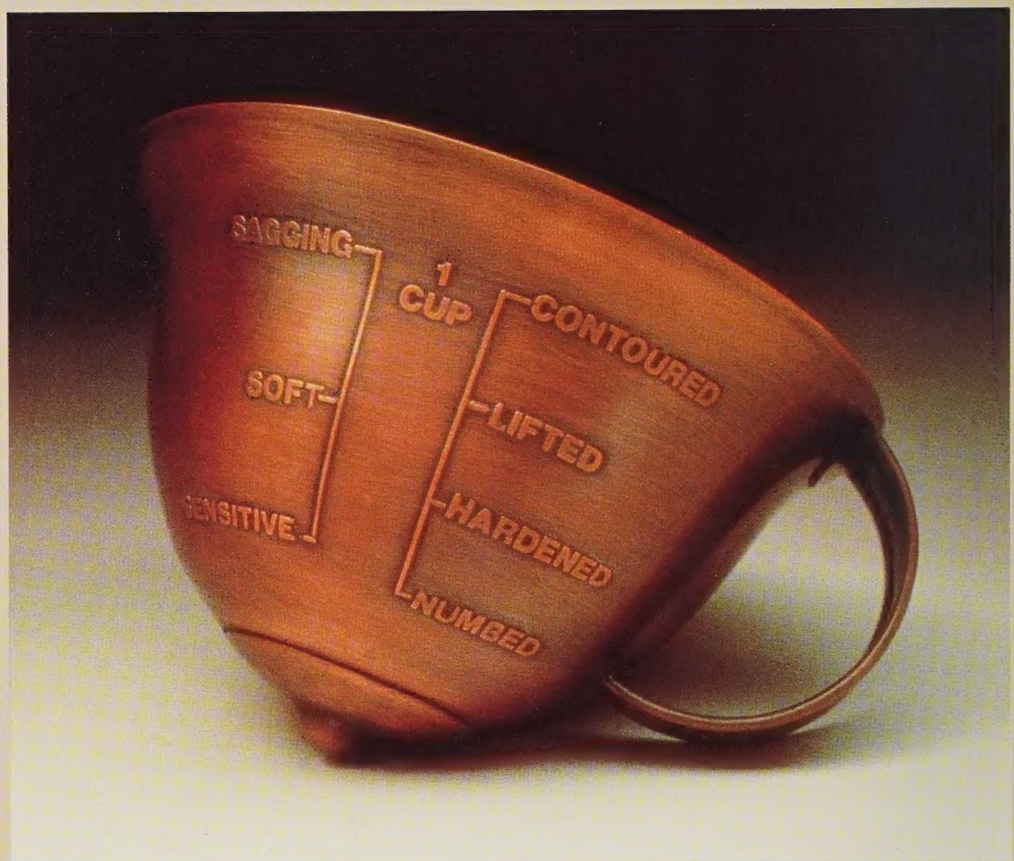
1 Author's interview with Sandra Sherman, May 12, 1994.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.





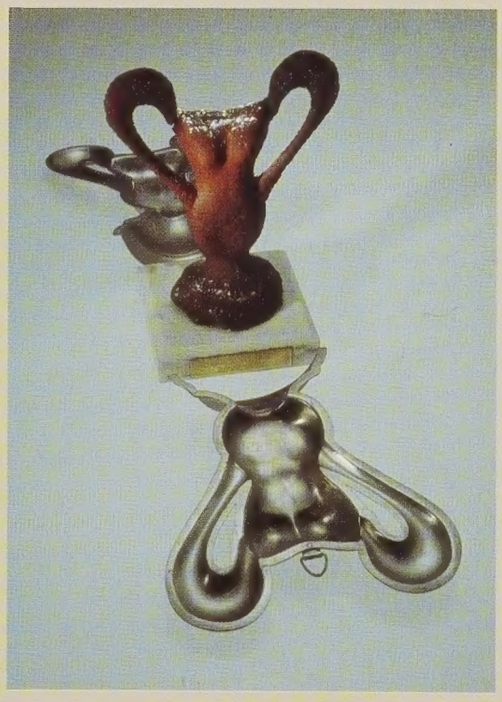
Sandra Bonazoli

Obsession and desire, whetted and starved by a society inundated with images of perfection and the elusive satisfaction concomitant with consumption, do battle with our exhausted souls. Martha Stewart becomes a celebrity offering a 12 step program for realizing domestic *authenticity* on The Learning Channel. The homemade cookie reifies both labor and love, the desperate attempt of an already overworked, over exercised, yet still *imperfect* domestic worker to both find and to give love and solace in a world where their simulacrum is more quickly purchased with a gold card. Sandra Bonazoli cleverly collapses and confuses the distinction between labor and craft, object and desire. Her domestic objects and the *indulgent* treats which are turned out of them, hot from the oven, offer guilty but sweet pleasure. For a moment the consumer is the victor and a finely crafted, well conceived object rises above the cheap, mass produced impostors which leave us wanting.



Top
Measuring Cup, 1995
copper
3 x 5¼ x 4¼"

Above
Set of Measuring Cups, 1994
copper, nickel plate
largest cup 4"



Top
Chocolate Charm Bracelet (Feminine Appetite), 1995
chocolate, silver, mixed media
11 x 3½"

Above
One Hundred Years of Consumption, 1995
copper, tin plate, sugar cookies
3½ x 5½"

Masculine Appetite, 1995
copper, tin plate, chocolate cake
18 x 7 x 5½"

DISCOVERING the Art of Mongolia

TEXT BY LANIE LEE

As the global economy expands and the Internet gives us access to faraway destinations in a matter of minutes, there is a growing interest in places that once seemed remote, barren, and forbidden. Mongolia certainly fits those requirements. A few years ago the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles organized a traveling exhibition of artifacts excavated from Inner Mongolia called *Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan.* Last year, the Asian Museum of Art in San Francisco organized a traveling exhibition called *Mongolia: The Legacy of Chinggis Khan,* which focused on Outer Mongolia.

Though the titles sound as if the exhibitions may have a lot in common, there are major differences between them. The Natural History Museum exhibit had an archaeological focus on the early steppe empires of Inner Mongolia, beginning with the early ethnic tribes and ending with the Mongols. The artifacts and artworks come from a large period of time, dating from the 3rd and 2nd millenniums B.C.E. to the 14th century. In contrast the Asian Museum of Art emphasized the Buddhist artworks of the Mongols in Outer Mongolia. These works date from the 17th to the 20th centuries (mostly from the 19th-20th centuries).

Considering the amount of information presented both museums did an incredible job in documenting and cataloging the works. They succeeded in bringing to the public a spectacular range of Mongolian artwork which represented a vibrant cultural history of these nomadic people that had largely been previously ignored.

The name Chinggis Khan, used freely in both exhibition titles, conjures the image of the formidable conqueror. Most people think of him as a leader and a fierce warrior who brought fear and destruction to those who stood in his way.

Who was Chinggis Khan? What was his legacy? Since Mongolian artwork developed from the many cultures that the Mongolian empire came into contact with, it's necessary to know something about the history of these nomadic people. Mongolia is a region that has seen changes as vast and sweeping as its terrain. Today, there is Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. Outer Mongolia, now a sovereign nation, broke away from the Soviet Union in 1990, and Inner Mongolia is an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. But at one time these vast regions of steppes and semi-deserts were home to pastoral nomadic tribes of different ethnic and cultural origins.

In the beginning of the 13th century Chinggis united the scattered tribes of this region into a Mongol confederation. After unifying his own territories, he set his sights on foreign areas.

Left, Figure 1
Zanabazar
Portrait of Zanabazar, 17th C.
gilt bronze, brocade
26½ x 17 x 13½"

Above, Figure 2
Zanabazar
Stupa, 17th C.
gilt bronze
10⅛ x 5⅝ x 5⅝"

Above right, Figure 3
Zanabazar and His Preincarnation,
17th C.
bronze
9½ x 8½"

There has been much written about the barbaric nature of Chinggis's military conquest, but some of his remarkable contributions are not as well known. Before Chinggis's reign, the Mongols had no ethnic identity. One of his major accomplishments was establishing the first written language of Mongolia. He was also responsible for setting up a Mongolian government. There is no question that Chinggis's attacks were brutal and ruthless, but once he conquered the lands around him, he adopted a policy of religious tolerance. Though an unusual tactic, he realized the necessity to promote good relations with the territories that he seized. By employing foreign interpreters, advisers, and officials as well as artisans and craftspeople, he enabled the Mongols to learn skills that their nomadic society lacked.

After Chinggis's death in 1227, his son, Ogodei, continued the expansion of the empire. He founded the first Mongol town and capital of Kharakhorum. In 1241 he led a campaign that ultimately made the Mongolian empire the largest contiguous land empire in world history, stretching from Korea in the east to what is today Poland and Hungary in the west.

The next dominant figure in Mongolia was Chinggis's grandson Khubilai Khan. By 1260 Khubilai was ruler of Mongolia, Tibet, Korea, Manchuria, and North China. Upon completing the conquest of South China, he founded the Yuan dynasty, which lasted from 1272 to 1368. Like his grandfather, Khubilai realized that it was beneficial to assimilate aspects of the cultures he conquered. Thus, he adopted a number of Chinese customs. Eventually he moved the Mongol capital from Kharakhorum to Dadu, which is in the area of modern-day Beijing. One of his goals was to try to build a multi-ethnic empire and as a part of that process, he had Muslim architects and Nepalese craftspeople (including the well-known Nepalese artist Anige) assist in the construction of the new capital. Khubilai valued craftspeople and artists, so throughout his reign there was a great number of paintings, textiles, sculpture, and other artworks produced. Mongolians had an appreciation for Tibetan and Chinese art and they used forms and techniques from these cultures to create their own works of art.

During this period direct trade routes were opened between Europe and East Asia and the trade of goods undoubtedly had a great influence on the art styles of the cultures that were a part of that network. Khubilai's tolerance of other cultures and religions, especially Tibetan Buddhism, helped to pave the way for future exchange of ideas and culture with Tibet. However, it was difficult for Khubilai to maintain control of all the lands in his empire and by 1294 his reign had ended.

Throughout the 14th century, the Mongols continued to have difficulty remaining unified. The last Yuan leader was ousted from China in 1368, causing many Mongols to flee from China. With the end of the Yuan dynasty came the beginning of the Ming dynasty in China and relations between Mongolia and China were strained. About 20 years later, the Ming army invaded Kharakhorum and destroyed numerous Mongolian works of art. (Throughout Mongolia's history, the destruction of Mongolian works of art has left large voids and gaps in chronology.) Warfare continued throughout the Mongolian empire and from the late 14th to the 17th centuries, the Mongols remained within the territory of Mongolia, never regaining the glory of the earlier empire.

In the 16th century, Altan Khan established a more sedentary Mongolian state. This shift allowed Mongolian artisans and architects to create larger and longer lasting artworks and artifacts. The nomadic lifestyle had set limitations on the size, weight, and durability of previous artworks. Perhaps the greatest contribution made by Altan was his adoption of Tibetan Buddhism. Though this religion had appealed to other khans, it was Altan who introduced Buddhism to the masses. In 1586, Khan Abtai built the first Buddhist monastery, a lamasery, in Mongolia at Erden-Tsu near Kharakhorum.

Probably the most influential Mongolian in the 17th century was Zanabazar (1635-1723). In 1638 he became the first Bogdo Gegen, the holiest figure in Mongolian Buddhism. He was only 14 when he traveled to Tibet to study with the Dalai Lama. On his return to Mongolia in 1651, he brought back with him many skills, which eventually enabled him to build monasteries, translate Tibetan Buddhist texts into Mongolian, write poetry, and create paintings and sculpture.

Figure 4
Book Cover with Tsongkapa, Vajradhara, and King, 19th C.
gold, silver, embroidered silk
29 x 9 x 1"

Widely respected and trusted, Zanabazar tried to maintain peaceful relations with Mongolia's two powerful neighbors: the Russians and the Manchus. The Manchus had conquered China in 1644 and established the Ding dynasty in China, and the Russians were trying to expand into Asia. Eventually Zanabazar was left with no choice but to accept protection from the Manchus. From 1691 until 1911, the Ding dynasty dominated and controlled a large part of Mongolia. As a result, Mongolian artists had direct contact with Chinese artists and craftspeople, who were also followers of Tibetan Buddhism. Slowly but surely, the Chinese were able to reduce the power of the khans. Chinese merchants took advantage of the declining economy of Mongolia, which led to even worse economic conditions in Mongolia during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Mongolia's most noted artist, Zanabazar set up workshops for artisans, which became known as the School of Zanabazar. This period is known as Mongolia's renaissance. Though known as both a painter and sculptor, Zanabazar's gilt bronze sculptures are considered his best works. Many of his Buddhist statues were tribute gifts to the Ding court. Unfortunately, there are not many sculptures by Zanabazar and his school that survived the later purges.

Many sculptures from the Zanabazar school are simplistic forms decorated with intricate detail work. The influence of Tibetan art is evident, but it is not unusual to see hybrid works in most Asian art. As Buddhism spread throughout Asia so did the various styles from Tibet, India, Nepal, and China.

Usually, the body and the pedestal of Zanabazar's sculptures were cast separately and then soldered together. Smaller sculptures were made in one piece. One of the differences that can be discerned in the sculptures of the Zanabazar school when compared to works from China, Tibet, and Nepal is the different ways that the lotus petal was depicted. Zanabazar used a variety of designs, such as single, double, wavy, or scalloped petals. He also preferred to use a circular or drum-shaped lotus pedestal rather than the oval or rectangular shape commonly used in Tibet.

As the first Bogdo Gegen of Outer Mongolia, Zanabazar was the subject of numerous portraits made in a variety of media. Figure 1 the portrait of Zanabazar, made of gilt bronze, is indicative of the elegant form consistent with his school. The statue is a simple form of Zanabazar in a monk's robe, sitting with his legs folded beneath him. It is draped with a beautiful silk embroidered mantle. He holds a *dorje* (an important symbol in Buddhism which represents a skillful means) in his right hand and a bell in his left hand. (In Tibetan Buddhism these two objects together symbolize the union of wisdom and compassion that leads to enlightenment.) Zanabazar sits on an elaborate bronze throne, which has an intricate design and scalloped edges. There are animal forms on each side of the throne that blend into the design. Color was painted on the features of the face and the fingernails.

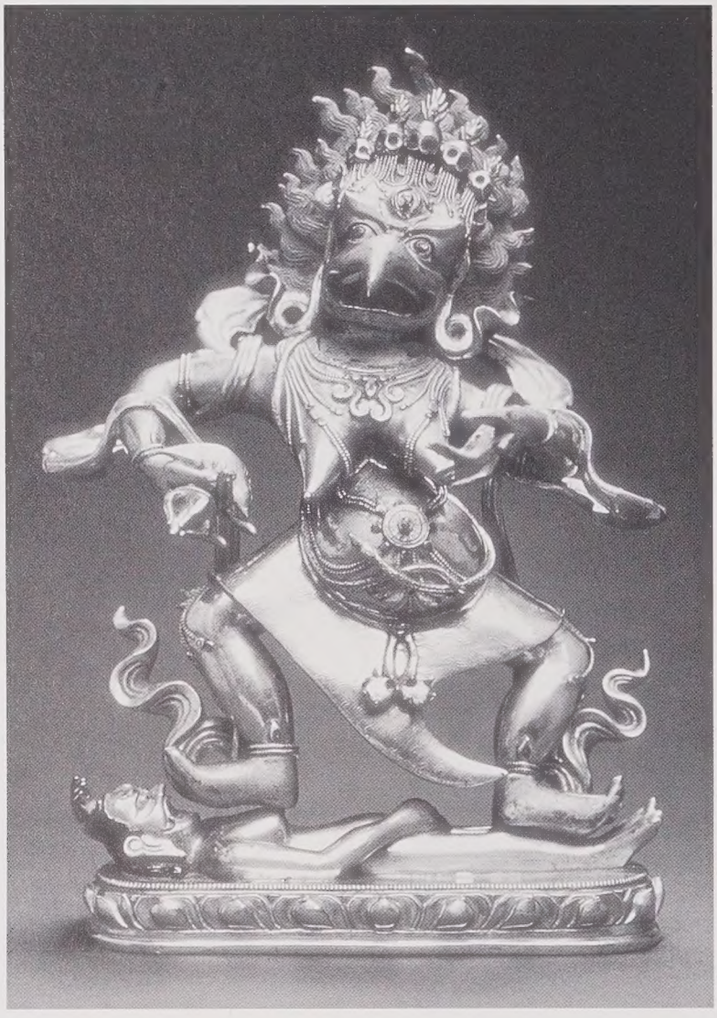
Another important Buddhist symbol that was also sculpted was the stupa. Originally developed in India, stupas are monumental shrines erected in places in ancient India that marked the great events or actions of Shakyamuni Buddha's life. They became so popular that eventually numerous stupas were built throughout Asia to house the sacred texts of other sages as well. In Figure 2 the model of a stupa made by the Zanabazar school is similar to ones found in Tibet and Nepal. Several levels of step-like platforms build up the height of the stupa and lead to a bulb-shaped body that houses a niche wherein a deity sits on a throne. The stupa has a few engraved patterns and some simply lined forms of animals, such as an elephant and a horse. As the construction of stupas multiplied throughout Asia, so too did the variations in the form of the stupa from country to country.

Metal casting was not restricted only to the production of freestanding sculpture. Figure 3 shows a cast gilt bronze plaque that depicts Zanabazar sitting on a lion throne surrounded by his pre-incarnations. Foliage snakes out from the throne. This narrative of Zanabazar's lineage is quite detailed for such a small scale relief.

Left, Figure 5A
Large Mould for Casting a Bronze Buddha, 19th C.
bronze with silk loop
9 x 7 x 4"

Above left, Figure 5B
Mould for A Statue of Zanabazar, 18th C.
cast bronze
5⅞ x 6 x 2⅜"

Above, center and right, Figure 5C
Mould for a Gelugpa Monk, 19th/20th C.
cast bronze
5¾ x 5 x 4⅜"



Metal was also used with other materials such as textiles and papier maché. In Figure 4 the book cover for a 220-page sutra, dating from the late 19th century, is a unique collage of materials. The sacred images and text are flat-hammered silver and raised gold. Red coral and bone make up the yin-yang symbol. Brocade curtains embroidered in silk protect the page.

While the Zanabazar school produced the best sculptures in Outer Mongolia, artists in Dolonnor (about 200 miles northwest of Beijing) were making exquisite sculptures, too. Dolonnor was the most important center of Mongolian Buddhism in Inner Mongolia. No doubt both schools influenced the future generation of artists in Mongolia.

Three bronze molds that Mongolian sculptors used to make reproductions of bronze statues of Shakyamuni Buddha, Zanabazar, and a Lama can be seen in Figures 5a, 5b, and 5c. It is believed that Zanabazar introduced this lost-wax technique to Mongolia in the mid-17th century.

A frightening-looking guardian goddess Kakasya (half crow and half human female) is shown in Figure 6. Sharp, angular shapes protrude from the deity in a threatening manner. Red pigment was painted on the hair (red hair symbolized a wrathful deity) and a row of skulls form a headdress, above the third eye. Kakasya dances on top of a corpse, which lies on top of a lotus petal base. (This type of lotus petal base is associated with Chinese sculptures from that time.) A snake coils around the goddess like an ornamental decoration, intertwined with chains of jewels that also envelop her.

Animals, especially the horse, camel, yak and cattle, sheep, and goat, have always played an important role in the lives of the nomadic Mongolians. So it is not unusual to see them depicted in artwork. A prime example is illustrated by Figure 7 (a double-spouted ewer from the early 20th century). A cow tops the lid, a ram's head is positioned on each side of the handle, and the long neck of a camel spouts on each end of the ewer. Lotus petals cover the lid and base of the ewer.

Other animals, such as the deer, are symbolic in Buddhism. It is said that in a previous life Buddha lived on earth as a deer. Wolves, a common sight in Mongolia, are associated with death in Buddhism. The sculptures of a deer and a wolf, in Figures 8 and 9, are made from gilt copper alloy, dating from the late 18th-19th century. The influence of Zanabazar is seen in the use of simple forms rather than elaborate details to depict each animal. There are no pedestals to obstruct the lines of motion in each animal.

The most important animal to Mongolians is the horse and they honor their steeds with saddles that are elaborate pieces of art. By studying a saddle, one can tell both the tribe and the status of the rider. The Khalkha saddle shown in Figure 10 (20th century) is constructed of a wooden frame and covered with leather and a patterned Tibetan wool. Strips of repoussé silver decorate the high pommel and the rim of the cantle.

Top left, Figure 6
Kakasya, 19th/20th C.
gilt bronze
11 x 7½ x 4⅜"

Above left, Figure 7
Double Spouted Ewer, 19th/20th C.
silver
10 x 11½ x 6⅜"

Figure 8
Deer, 19th/20th C.
gilt bronze
18½ x 34 x 6⅝"

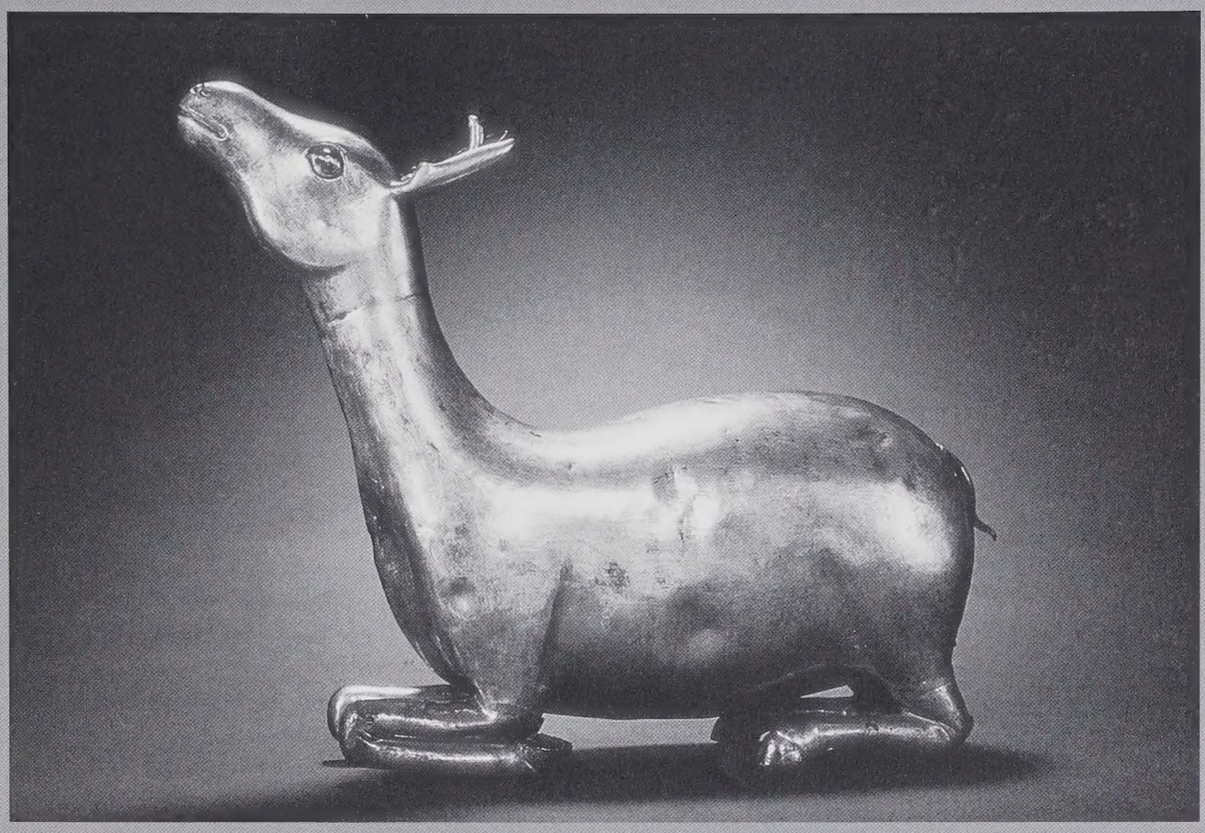


Figure 9
Wolf, 19th/20th C.
gilt bronze
21½ x 34¼ x 10¼"

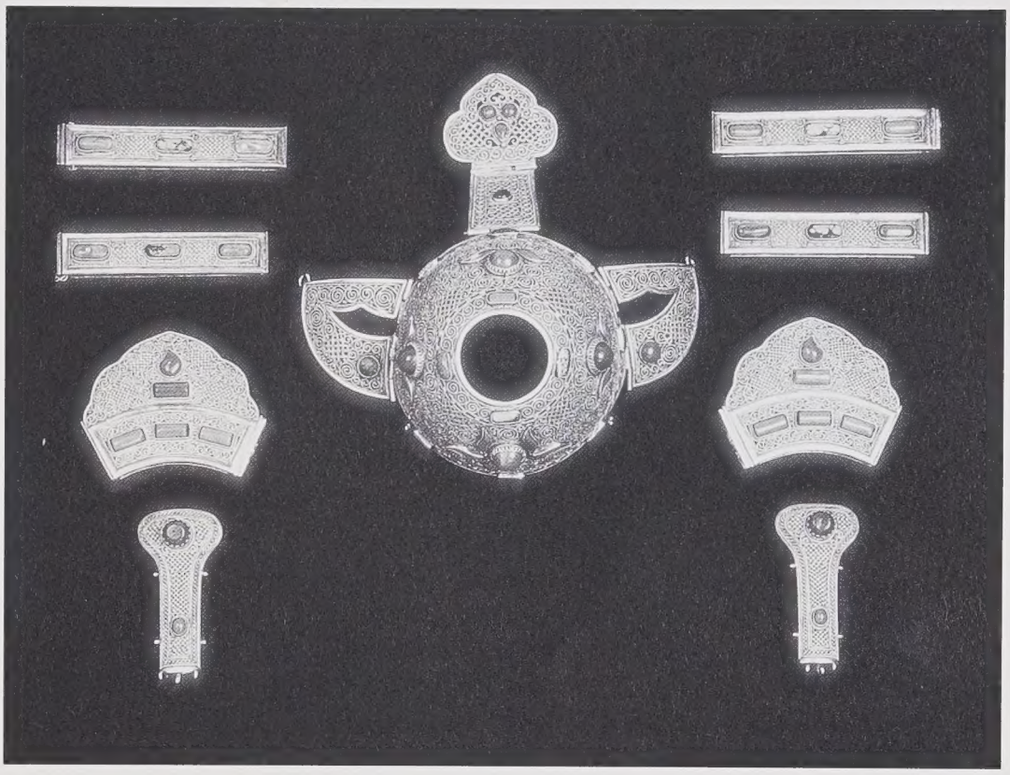
Above, Figure 10
Khalka Saddle, 19th/20th C.
wood, leather, steel, wool
13⅜ x 58¼"

Right, Figure 11
Set of Khalkha Women's Ornaments,
19th/20th C.
silver

Far right, Figure 12
Khalkha Woman's Headdress, 19th/20th C.
gilt silver, brocade

Mongolian metalsmiths were well respected, and as with many other trades, their skills were passed on from father to son. Most Mongolian metalworks were either religious artifacts or had a utilitarian purpose. Even some of the most decorative works were functional, too. For example, jewelry was made in a specific style to distinguish one tribe from another. It might also indicate a woman's marital status and her wealth. Figure 11 shows a set of ornaments dating from the 19th-20th century and worn by a Khalkha woman. These ornaments are useful as well as decorative. Each piece to the right and to the left of the bracelets has three objects dangling from chains: an ear pick, a pair of tweezers, and a nail cleaner. Ornaments made for men usually had eating utensils, such as knives and chopsticks. The workmanship of the silver bracelet shown at the bottom is superb: dragon heads in high relief decorate each end of the bracelet and flow into the twisted pattern of the band.

A fine example of intricate filigree silver work can be seen in Figure 12, which shows a Khalkha woman's headdress, dating from the late 19th to early 20th century. Coral and turquoise stones are set onto a complex interwoven design of spirals and knots. A married Khalkha woman would wear a skull cap, such as the one shown, underneath a high pointed hat.



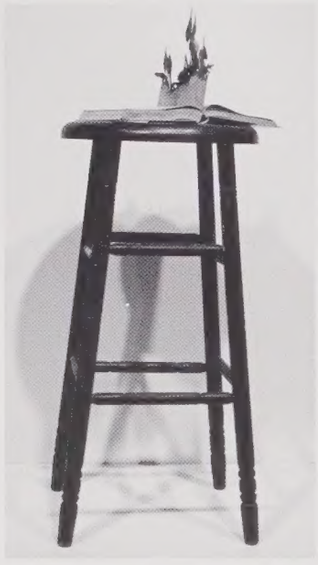
The Ding dynasty fell in 1911 and the Republic of China was formed in 1912. During this period Mongolia tried to break away from Chinese control. As a result, in 1921 some Mongols began cooperating with the Soviet Union, and by 1924 the Mongolian People's Republic was formed.

The Mongolian Communists modeled their government policies after the Soviet Union and in turn received economic aid. Before long the Soviets called for the suppression of Mongolian nationalism. Mongolia's history was revised and any mention of Chinggis Khan was banned. The most horrendous assault on Mongolian culture occurred in the 1930s, when the Soviets launched an attack on Buddhism. Monasteries were confiscated and numerous books and works of art were destroyed. It was not until the late 1980s, with the lessening of Soviet economic and political support that Mongolia began on its journey to independence.

Today the cultural heritage of Mongolia is being revived. Chinggis Khan is once again viewed as a national hero. Mongolia is redefining itself. The artworks that have survived give us an idea of the level of technical sophistication Mongolian artisans were able to achieve. A rich legacy is being rediscovered.

The reproductions in this article were provided through The Asian Museum of Art in San Francisco. All photographs by Kaz Tsuruta, Asian Museum of San Francisco.

Lanie Lee is a writer and editor who lives in New York, NY.



Art Metal of Japan

National Ornamental Metal Museum
Memphis, Tennessee
April 28 – July 7, 1996

By Linda Raiteri

ABOVE LEFT
Kazuma Oshita
Stool for a Poet
brass, life-size

ABOVE
Ken-ichi Suganuma
Untitled Work 117
cast iron
14 x 14 x 16"

"People who can receive the presence of a work of art may find themselves restored to selves they have half forgotten." writes sculptor Anne Truitt.

The dissembling mystery of the half-forgotten self is stunningly awakened by the works of the six Japanese master metalsmiths in "Art Metal of Japan". Objects are not necessarily what they seem. Iron looks like leather; brass looks like paper. Surfaces crack to reveal unsuspected depths.

Curated by Takuya Kosugi, a metalsmith who shares the anthropologist's fascination with the effects of culture, this exhibition presents contemporary works fabricated within the 2000 year tradition of Japanese metalworking.

In 1988, on his third trip to China, the half-forgotten country of his birth, Takuya Kosugi went into the desert. Growing up in densely populated Japan, he had never experienced such vastness. When he returned, months went by and he could not work. One day he decided to let his hand do the work. He drew a picture. He scribbled in the names of alloys. Unable to capture his vision in three dimensions, he began working in two.

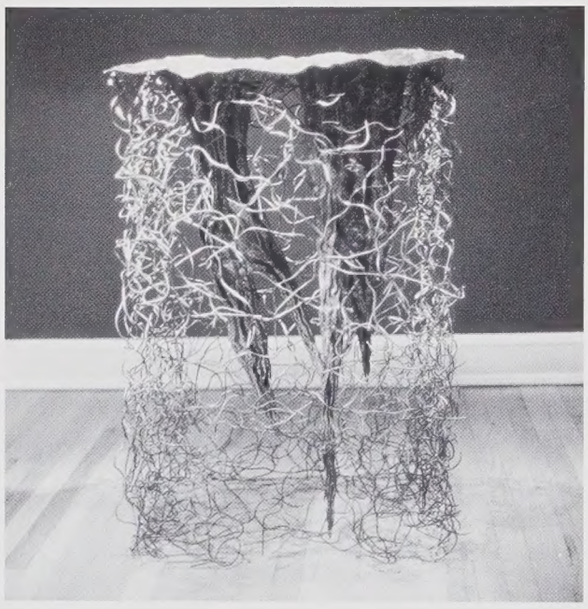
Kosugi's metalworks look like paintings. In *Indian Land*, aluminum, gold and silver leaf, and urushi create jagged rock formations against a cobalt sky. In *Miyabi I, II,* and *III (Stone Garden)*, alloy rocks are set into a lake of raked aluminum and bronze, conveying the serenity of a Zen garden.

Hirotoshi Itoh's iron vessels, inlaid with gold and silver, seem to have the suppleness of fine leather. For twenty years he has been using these same shapes. He creates them by "listening" to the material. Each piece seems to whisper a mystery.

Tsukimatsu-Yama, The Mountain Waiting for the Rising Moon, is a high domed vessel with cloud forms inlayed with gold. Half a brass circle is visible under the lid. A melting vessel with handles, *Onzou*, has inlaid silver tridents leading from the four corners of the lid. These are the places, where the fairies can enter. *Onzou* is a storage place. It is the whole of space. It is the Buddhist's void. It is a repository for many good things, both the vessel and the space inside.

Keiko Kubota's images are about the surfacing of that which is most interior. Of hammered copper and gold foil, what is inside is leaking through, or cracking the shell, or exploding from the center of being, as in her 1991 wall sculpture, *Explosion.* In *Planet Plant*, a hammered copper sphere, small plants break the crust. On the wall to the left, a smaller planet plant is mounted. In the upstairs gallery are five more small planets, children of this one.

One of a series of five, *Subterranean Soul*, looks like a tornado supported by mesh. Words are inscribed on its upper surface. "This is the conscious mind," Kubota explains. "The soul is like the root of the tree." There are worlds within that are not visible on the surface. "We are all connected at the bottom of the unconscious mind. All connected to each other and to the universe. That is why we can share our feelings."



ABOVE
Mitsuhiro Ishikawa
Split Queen (left)
copper
15 x 10 x 32"
Standing Queen (right)
copper, brass
10 x 10½ x 33"

RIGHT, TOP
Hirotoshi Itoh
Onzou (decorated vessel)
iron, gold and silver inlay
24 x 12 x 12"

Photographs
by Linda Raiteri

RIGHT
Keiko Kubota
Subterranean Soul
copper, gold foil
30 x 24 x 30"

Mitsuhiro Ishikawa's four amazingly fluid hammered copper torsos seem to be an increasingly abstract expression of a single image. "Not a series" Ishikawa states, "each piece has its own period." He made *Standing Queen (GEN)* after an exhibit with his professor where he showed *Split Queen* static, like the Egyptian piece, *Pressed Up Queen*, with a split running from collar bone to waist. He says it is the first piece that was "other, not himself." *Standing Queen (GEN)* is full of power and movement, like a tall and proud African priestess. His most abstract piece in this show is *Triangle*. The female form becomes very tubular, very sleek. She loses the fecundity of the earlier pieces, yet she is solidly present, vibrant.

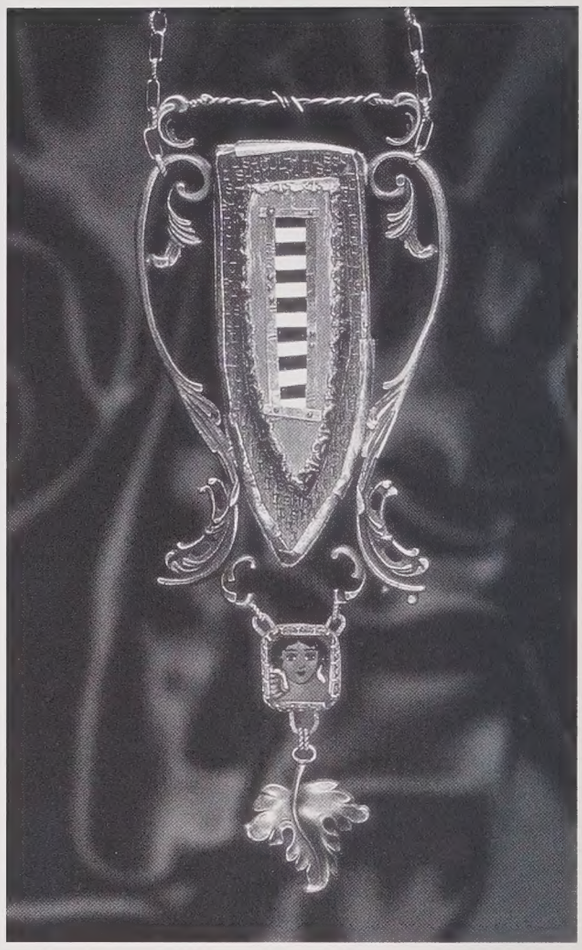
Born in an area of northern Japan which is famous for its iron casting, Ken-ichi Suganuma says casting is in his blood. *Untitled Work 117* is pitted and rough-edged like an old hip joint recovered from an archeological dig. *Untitled Work 76* could be a potter's whimsy after cutting the pot lids from a thick slab of clay. The surrounding space becomes form; the object, space. When asked why his pieces have no titles, Suganuma answered simply, "I wanted something I never had."

Kazuma Oshita, born in Hiroshima after World War II, has lived in the United States since 1976. He showed the only mixed media piece, *Reminiscence of Summer*. A photograph, brass pear, and a brass flower rest against an acrylic painting of a mule. *Stool for a Poet* looks like a wooden bar stool supporting an ordinary open book. The edges of the pages, however, are on fire. The flames, the paper thin pages of the book, and the stool itself, are all made of brass.

Several years ago, Kosugi curated *Cultures in Contact*, a traveling exhibition of Japanese artists showing works done before and after they went abroad. Kosugi's anthropological intrigue with the effects of different cultures on artists' works is the basis for this show as well. Two of the artists in this exhibit, Oshita and Kubota, currently live in New York. They have expanded the methods and techniques of their Japanese training to embody the visions brought forth from their experience of this culture. Will there be an effect of this, their first trip to America and their experiences in Wal-mart on the work of Itoh, Ishikawa, and Suganuma?

The works in this exhibition are numinous and imbued with spirit. Perhaps it is as Keiko Kubota says, "we are all connected." Through that connection, we are restored.

Linda Raiteri is a writer and critic who lives in Memphis, Tennessee



Marcia MacDonald
Only Your Hairdresser Knows for Sure, 1995
mixed media
21 x 4½ x ¾"

Penchant for Pendants

BonaKeane Decorative Arts Gallery
Portland, Oregon
March 7 – 30, 1996

By Anne Allen

The word penchant suggests a stronger liking for the format than was represented by the works in "A Penchant for Pendants" at BonaKeane Decorative Arts Gallery.

The objective stated by BonaKeane owners Kate Bonasinga and Shannon Keane, was to invite artists whose works interested them to respond to a particular format – that of the pendant, and see what might result. Bonasinga and Keane were not interested in showcasing only regional talent (though regional artists were the majority here) nor did they, as might be expected, only focus on artists whose oeuvre is the pendant (Jan Baum and Marcia MacDonald were the ringers in that respect). Instead, their intent was to provide a framework that would generate investigation and enjoyment for both artist and audience. Some artists apparently found in the format a greater opportunity for exploration than others, and, as often in an exhibition of this kind, the show winded up offering too broad a spectrum of styles and approaches and failed to achieve an overall strength or focus.

This was the gallery's first jewelry invitational and it featured anywhere from a single piece up to a small series of works by each of the 18 artists included: Jan Baum, Patty Chaney, Jocelyn Chateauvert, Andy Cooperman, Chris Giffin, Victoria Haven, Robin Kraft, Aaron Kramer, Susan Kunimatsu, Marcia MacDonald, Rebecca Myers, Terry Porter, Joy Raskin, Kiff Slemmons, Deb Stoner, Vernon Theiss, Kate Wagle, and Martina Windels.

A show of this kind sets up expectations of viewing not only one-of-a-kind works, but works uniquely considered in view of the assignment, that is: works that yield a different experience than what you expect to get from the jewelry counter at Nordstroms. So I was disappointed by the casual level of operation in the approach of some of the work, as if the two very different forms of the fibula and the pendill are now considered interchangeable simply for their potential to isolate an art object against the body. A number of these neckpieces approach the pendant from the more pictorial format of the brooch. Format becomes interchangeable as brooches metamorphose into pendants as the result of removable hardware and suspension. Chris Giffin's work is one such example. Her large and captivating, yet essentially frontal pieces, would appear to be more comfortable both worn and considered as brooches.

While rethinking my understanding of the distinction between one-of-a-kind works in series and production work, I was still concerned by the anonymity of much of the work. Aaron Kramer's well balanced pendants, often incorporating elongated drops carved from Catalin and Delrin rod, offer clean geometries, flawless craftsmanship, and a wearable scale. While playing out more intimate variations on his usual work with cast-off industrial materials, Kramer's materials were handled in a uniform way that reduced them to the quality of any material and caused them to lose part of their potential impact. Terry Porter's abundant pieces could have benefited from editing. Some, such as *Eye Pendant* were much stronger than others. And Patty Chaney's well-crafted, high-end sea shell neckpiece seemed embarrassingly out of place, and as a necklace, it failed to meet the basic requirements of the exhibition.

Straddling the line between production and series more successfully were the light, minimal, and meticulous choker neckpieces by Martina Windels. In this context they benefited from their European influence and stood out for their delicate, machined beauty. Softly folded geometric forms in gold or patinaed sterling silver on thin sterling hoops of choker length, the pieces look as though they would rest lightly on the collarbone, settling into the hollow at the base of the throat. Windels seems to have reinvented the choker here, as these works utilize the format but not the style of that once again prevalent jewelry form of the 1970s.

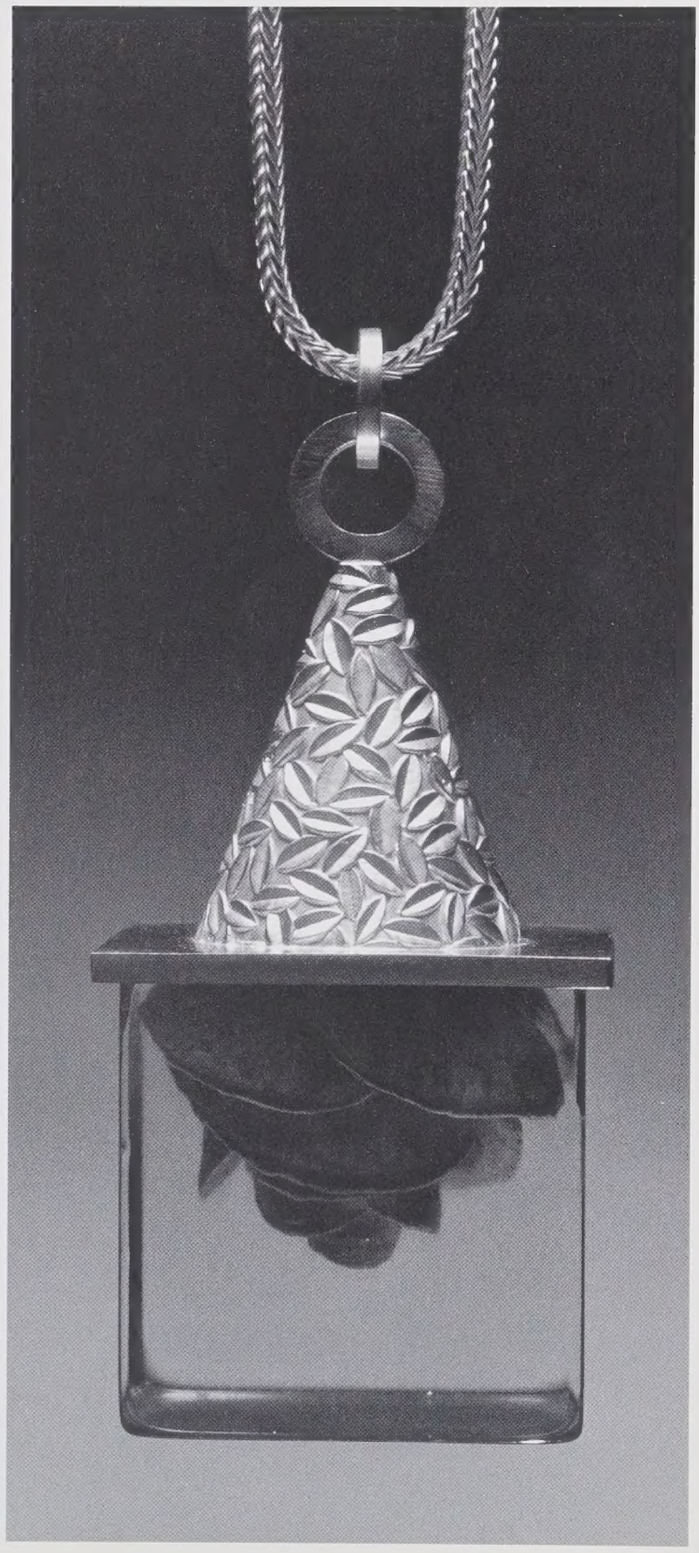
The show could have benefited from a different installation, one more tailored to the unique gravity and body-responsive qualifies of the pendant. Installed in horizontal cases on the second, mezzanine-like level of the elegant gallery space, directly over the retail area, the exhibition relied primarily on a passive presentation of the works. Some were suspended on rods inside the cases, but the majority were simply displayed on fabric wrapped platforms. Allowing a greater number of the works to be viewed suspended would have formed a more distinct presence for the exhibition.

Other artists seized on the spirit of the venture and their pieces offered an evolution or adaptation of their current work. Examples included Deb Stoner's *Flower Power* pendants. Carved from a state-of-the art optical plastic, these colorful, translucent, portable magnifiers share part of their aesthetic with Arline Fisch and Sara Croninger's recent work, and they playfully extend and expand upon Stoner's established reputation for handmade, innovative eyewear. Jocelyn Chateauvert adapted her large, delicate abaca paper lingerie necklaces and pared them down into smaller, iconic objects that have the addition of silver tablets carved with figurative ruins to weight them, while the paper flutters against the body. Robin Kraft left the nest, metaphorically and otherwise, with her miniature silver rendition of workaday *In and Out* boxes. Imbued with an almost doll-house feel, *Weight: Presence*, would be a very smart addition to the work uniform and offers the wearer a subtle incentive to get through the daily grind.

Among the most successful responses in the show were the two rose/topiary pendants by Kate Wagle and the two recently completed locket/pendants by Jan Baum. Expanding on her ongoing investigation into the image and history of the rose, Wagle's process-intensive pendants initially conceal much of how they were accomplished. The results are at once strange and familiar. The pendants are pleasantly weighted and scaled to a cupped palm. Entitled *Memento Vida*, each holds a carved red rose sealed inside a lucite form, capped by a conical, stylized, foliate form in sterling silver. The lucite material and the choice of form draw from recognizable kitsch and decorative art sources, but the resulting paperweight-like objects are bewilderingly and uniquely, beautiful. Baum's pieces further her exploration into ideas of protection and internal/external relationships and her selections and methods are informed by historical styles and themes. The artist's use of the plumb bob form and its functional ties to the forces of gravity give her pieces a unique sense of physicality. These are masterfully constructed compositions; hinged and cage-like, the tiny dimensional vessels operate at a scale that is a good fit with the ideas presented. There is a great deal of power and excitement in these works. They, along with the works of Windels, Kraft, and Stoner, were the strength of the show.

Anne Allen is an Artist-In-Residence at the Oregon School of Arts and Crafts.

Kate Wagle
Memento Vita #2, 1996
sterling, lucite, paint
3 x 1½ x ½"
Photograph by Richard Gehrke



RIGHT
Opera Fan, 1980
fine and sterling silver,
14k, 18k, 10 x 7"

FAR RIGHT
Inspired by Heroes: The Moche of Sipan, 1970
fine and sterling silver,
feathers, 7"

Photographs on this page
by Arline Fisch

Arline Fisch
Textile Techniques in Metal

Connell Gallery

Atlanta, Georgia

May 3 – June 15, 1996

By Dorothy Joiner

RIGHT
Twill Weave, 1970
fine silver wire, sterling,
copper, gold
1 x 40"

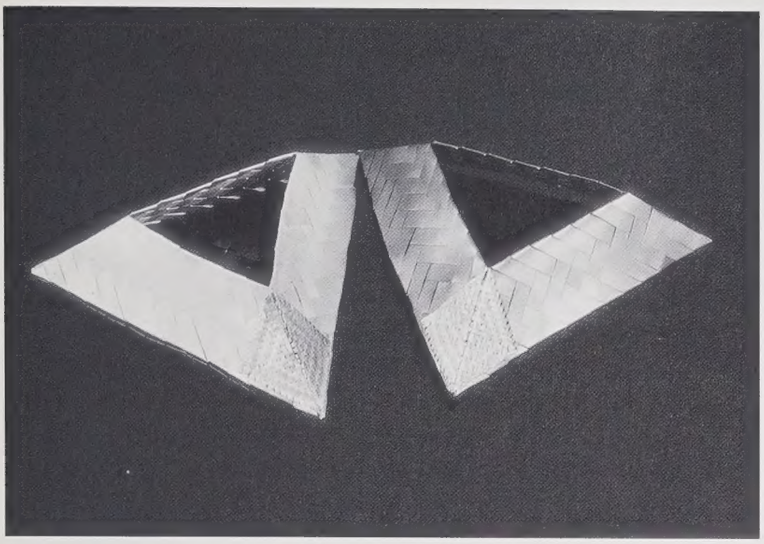
Arline Fisch's retrospective exhibition at Connell Gallery, Atlanta, definitively alters traditional notions about what jewelry should be. Drawing on historical precedents as well as on an innate penchant for exploration, Fisch has become a forerunner in the contemporary use of textile techniques used to work in metal. Having abandoned her initial union of yarn with metal after the '60s, the artist now weaves, braids, and knits entirely with metal strips and wire. In works simultaneously varied, practical, and whimsical, Fisch takes jewelry beyond the conventional scale, relating it to the whole person. Skillfully displayed, the exhibit afforded ample space for each piece to create its own presence. Larger necklaces were shown on busts, one of Julius Caesar; another of Josephine Bonaparte, and large pieces were worn by mannequins, accenting the jewelry's dramatic human proportions.

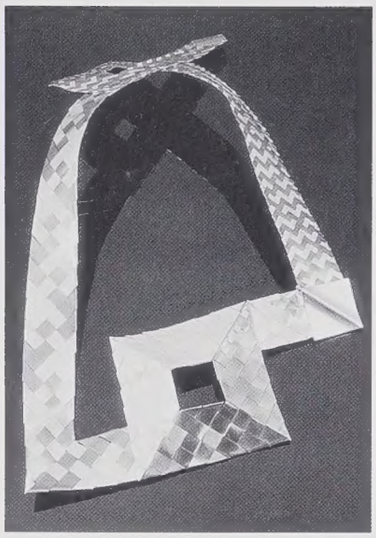
Fisch's plenitude of effects derives from simple materials: silver, 14 and 18k, and copper wire coated with colored resins. Less frequently she uses anodized titanium, platinum wire, and semiprecious-never precious-gems.

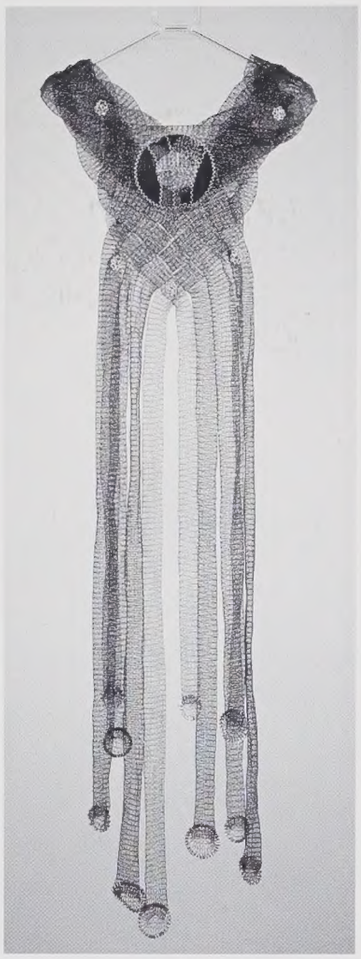
Among the most fanciful of her creations, *Twill Weave*, 1970 is a neckband of hand-woven silver with feathers fanning down several inches over the upper chest. Offsetting the band's density with their soft weightlessness, the feathers serve as a dun-colored foil to the luminous silver sheen. Similarly playful, the fan of *Opera Fan*, 1980 detaches from its silver wire necklace to be used in a warm theater. Somewhat like an elegant little whiskbroom, the fan is fashioned with alternating plaits of fine silver and 18k gold. Left unfinished, the ends of the braids lend an unbridled flourish to the geometric, curving character of the work.

Impressive, too, are the varied effects which Fisch achieves in the geometrically inspired pieces of the early '90s. Using both zigzag and diagonal braiding techniques in several widths of gold, sterling, and oxidized silver, she fashions works which recall, because of their boldness and significant dimensions, the pectorals of the past. An asymmetrical construction, *Black + White + Gold*, 1992, for example, places a dramatic hollowed square over the chest and another as a counterbalance behind the neck. A second striking piece, *Five-sided Plaid*, 1992, joins five lengths of various braids; the tension thus engendered provides graceful curves to the work. Removing one of the detachable sections makes a very different, close-fitting necklace. Smaller but no less handsome is a pair of bracelets, *Black and White Triangles*, 1992, resembling truncated pyramids: one, in sterling; the other, oxidized silver. Each is accented by a diamond shape of 18k braid. These are meant to be worn together on one arm or separated with one on each arm.

Tending to blur distinctions between jewelry and garments are the machine-knitted works of copper wire coated with colored resins. A flair of burnt orange and red, *Ruffled Collar*, 1993 surrounds the neck with a double flourish of wide, billowing ruffles. A silver clasp anchors the exuberance, and two narrow, knitted tubes dangle like ribbons. Even more audacious, *Multicolor Braid with Silver Flowers*, 1995 is constructed of long tubes in deep blue, purple, pink, and several shades of red. Braided to form a kind of bodice, the tubes of varying lengths in front of the garment fall freely toward the floor, each culminating in a pleated circle of silver. Silver flowers of similar construction adorn the bodice.







LEFT TO RIGHT

Black and White Triangles, 1992
oxidized sterling, 18k
6 x 6" each
Photograph by Arline Fisch

Black + White + Gold, 1992
oxidized sterling, 18k
9 x 15"
Photograph by Arline Fisch

Multicolor Braid with Silver, 1995
coated copper wire
Front: 14 x 8", Back: 14 x 45"
Photograph by Will Gillette

Influenced by recent archaeological findings in Peru, Fisch titles one of her most compelling necklaces *Inspired by Heroes: The Moche of Sipán*, 1995. Ample beads, three inches in diameter, made by affixing diaphanous patterns of knitted silver wire to silver rings (one lined in copper, the next in gold), alternate with smaller silver buttons to fashion a necklace worthy of Napoleon's empress, on whose bust it is displayed.

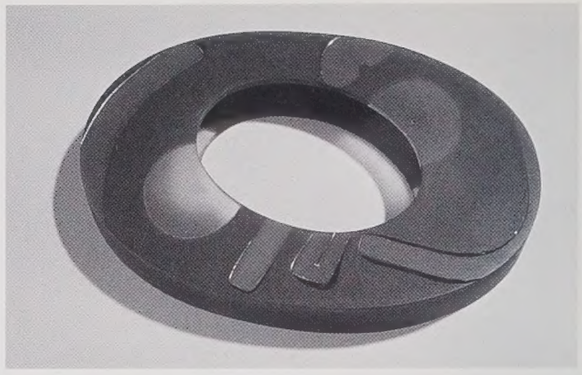
Covering the past two and a half decades of Fisch's work, the Connell Gallery retrospective offers not only a study of the artist's innovative translation of fiber techniques into metal but also an insight into her venturesome extension of ornamentation beyond the neck and wrists to the whole body.

Dorothy Joiner is a professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the State University of West Georgia in Carrollton, Georgia.

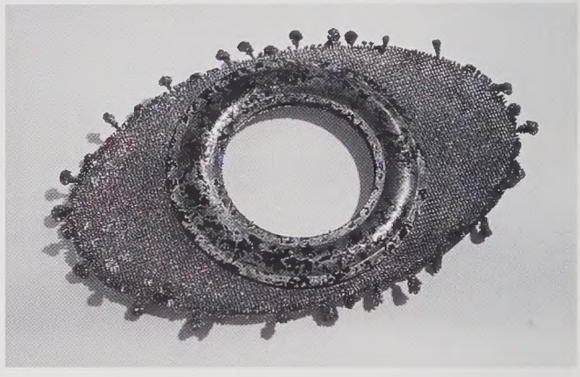
Ruffled Collar, 1993
coated copper wire,
sterling clasp, 14 x 42"
Photograph by Will Gillette

RIGHT
Yuko Yagisawa
Untitled, 1996
sterling silver, copper, 8"

FAR RIGHT
Marcia Bruno
Untitled, 1996
acrylic, 8"



RIGHT
Billie Jean Theide
EFAO #1, 1996
copper, bronze,
patina, 8½"



The Chain Gang

Target Gallery at the Torpedo Factory
Alexandria, Virginia
June 14 – July 28, 1996

Photographs by Bobbie Hasser

By Roseanne Raab

Hail, Hail The Gang's all here...141 strong, representing the styles, skills and ideas of contemporary American metalsmiths. Gold and silver may be the materials traditionally found at a jeweler's bench but not in "Chain Gang," where hair, sponge, plywood, rubber, and steel mix company with the best of ideas to define *art jewelry.*

Curators Linda Hesh and spouse Eric Margry have interpreted art jewelry as "the piece's design rather than the value of the materials." Rather than debate the definition, let's take this opportunity to examine a synergistic body of work that maintains individual characteristics. Theme shows don't always result in a successful exhibition, but I give "Chain Gang" a nine for its originality and successful execution. How would I have felt if each piece was on its own? Perhaps less positive, because the individual links did not add up to the sum of its parts.

Technical breakthroughs are not evident. Several of the works exhibit excellence when metalsmiths use their skills to etch, patina, electroform, and weave their materials. Best of show in this group are pieces by Yuko Yagisawa, Valerie Hector, Billie Jean Theide, and Rob Peacock. Minimalism is treated with unusual sensitivity by Sue Amendolara, Julie Mihalisin, and Tom Odell. I'll take rubber in the hands of Eric Margry and acrylic designs done by Marcia Bruno. I have difficulty when a link of bundled plastic bread ties is cited as art jewelry but I respond strongly to recycled materials creatively treated by John Grant and Harriete Estel Berman.

There is evidence of the Establishment reworking their styles. There is also a rare appearance by an established master, Harlan Butt, who put forth a splendid element with all the qualities of an artist who knows how to combine aesthetics with craftsmanship. Imagine this link enlarged to a 4 x 5' format and wall-hung, perhaps a candidate for the Whitney Biennial.

The collection is arranged in space to encourage the audience to follow the chain around and around. Kudos to Hesh and Margry for the skillful installation.

For those unable to see this collection on its travel schedule, I recommend the purchase of the "Chain Gang" CD-ROM. I also recommend that art teachers expose their students to this exhibition. It can encourage all of us who can't draw to find alternative ways to be an artist.

Roseanne Raab is an independant curator and collection advisor for twentieth century crafts. She lives in New York, NY.

TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Joanne Rapp Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
September 4 – October 14,1996

Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, Racine, WI
November 10 – January 5,1997

Craft Alliance, St. Louis, MO
March 7 – April 12, 1997

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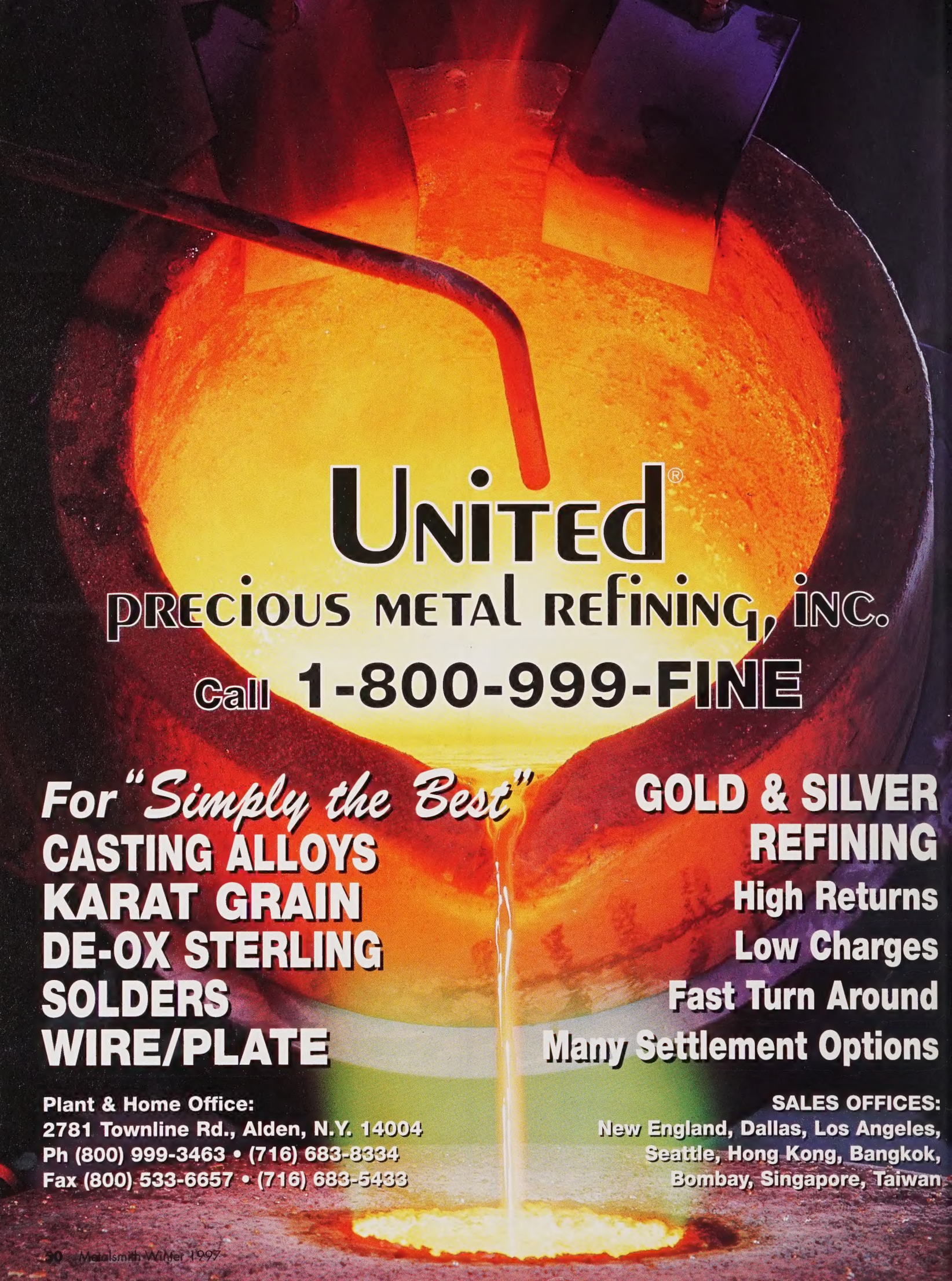
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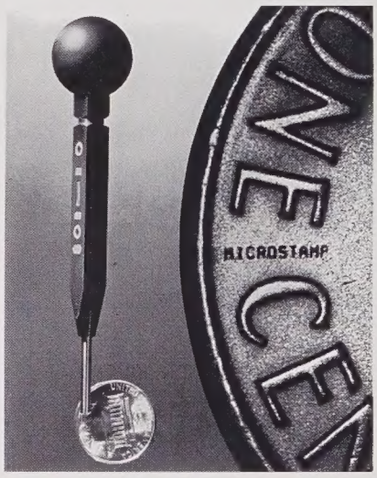

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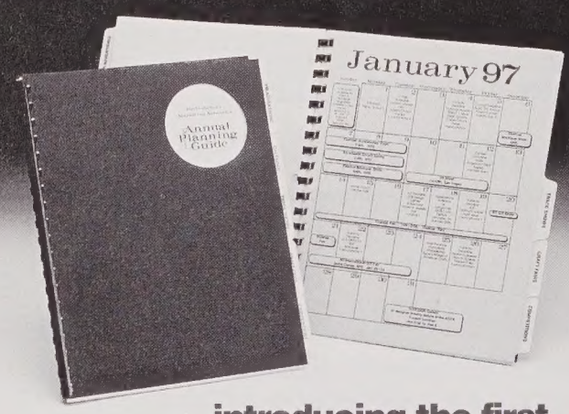

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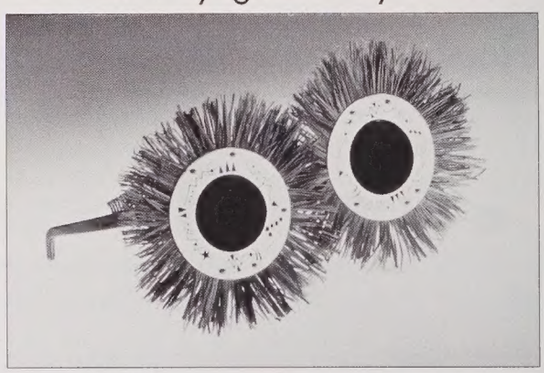

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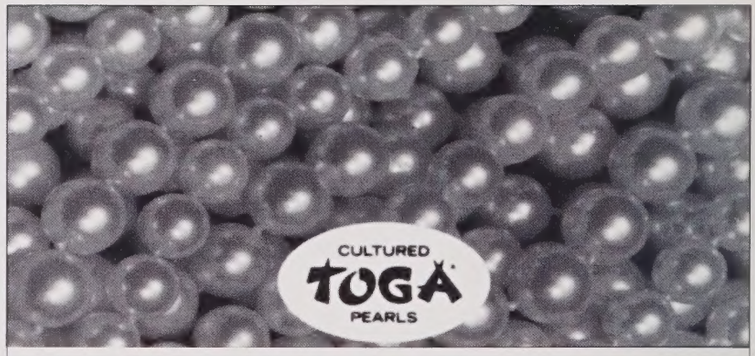

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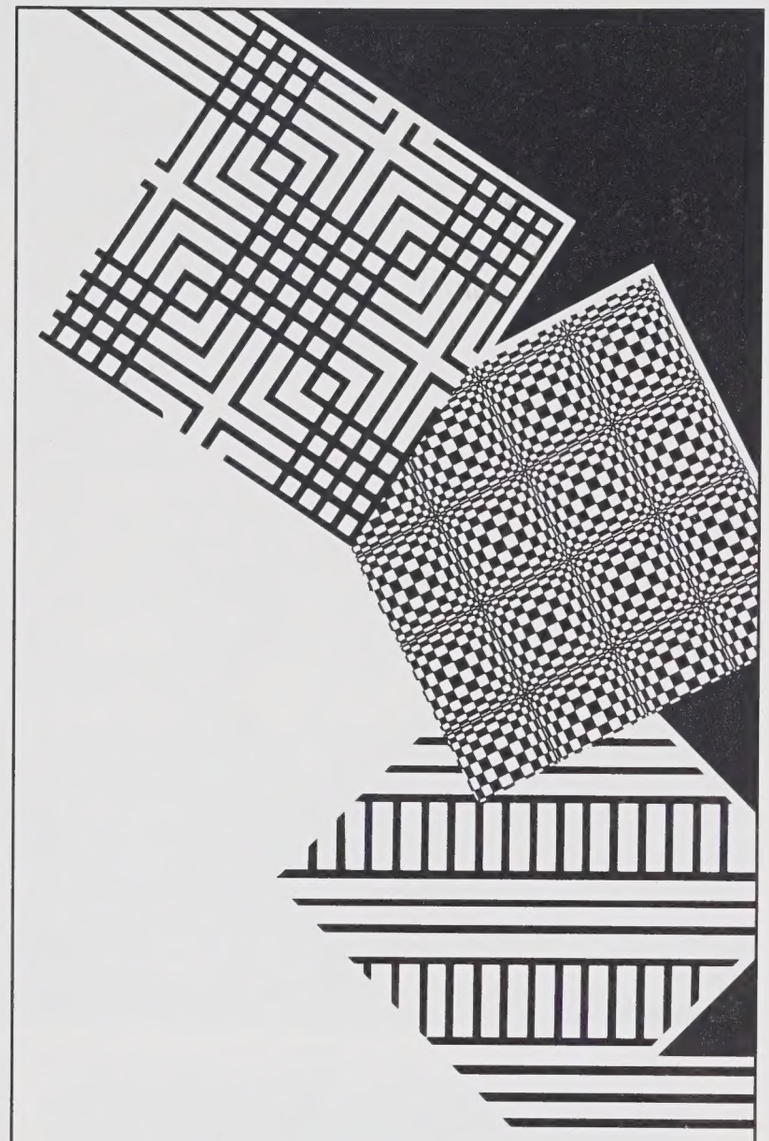

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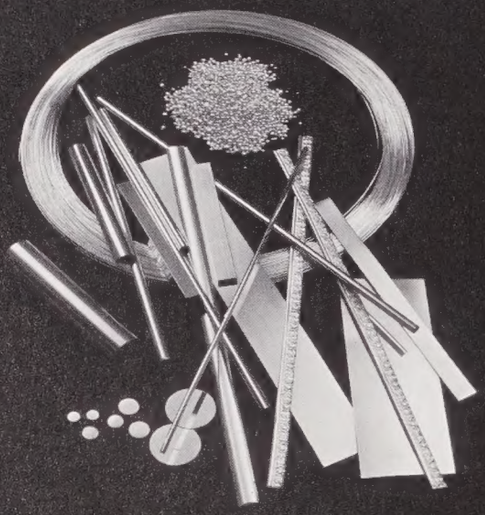

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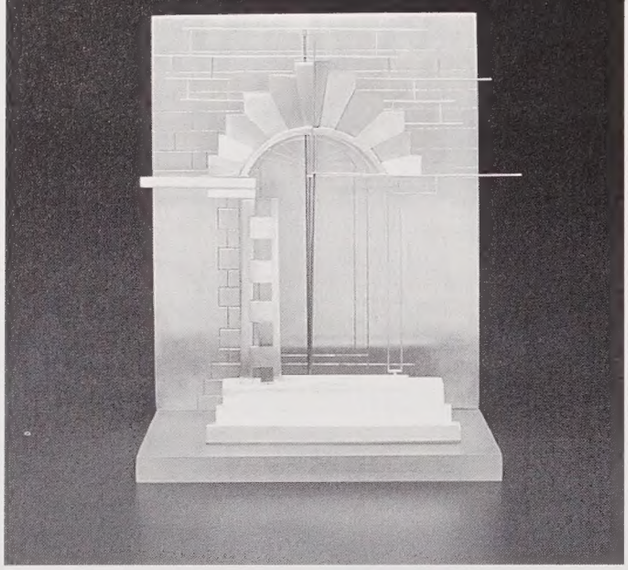

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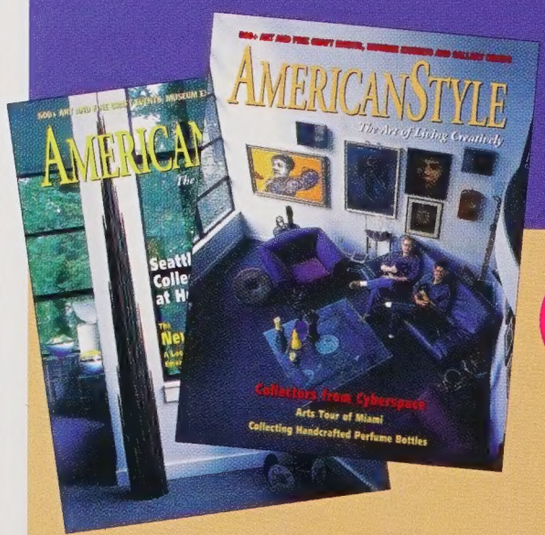

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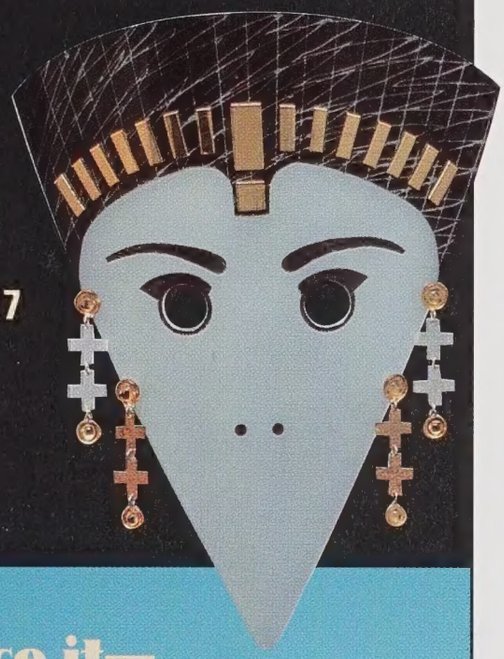

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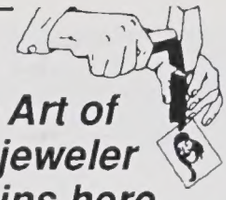

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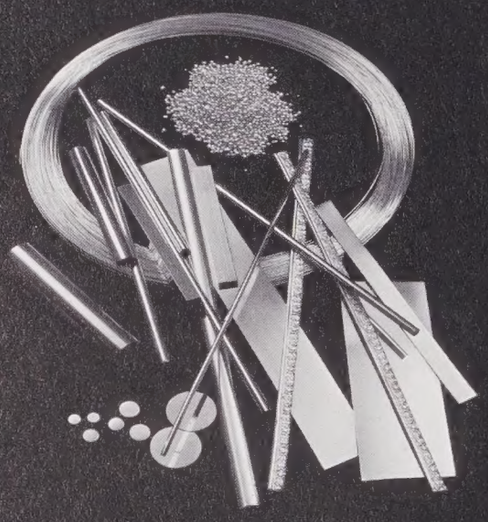

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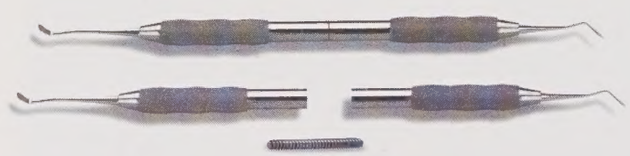

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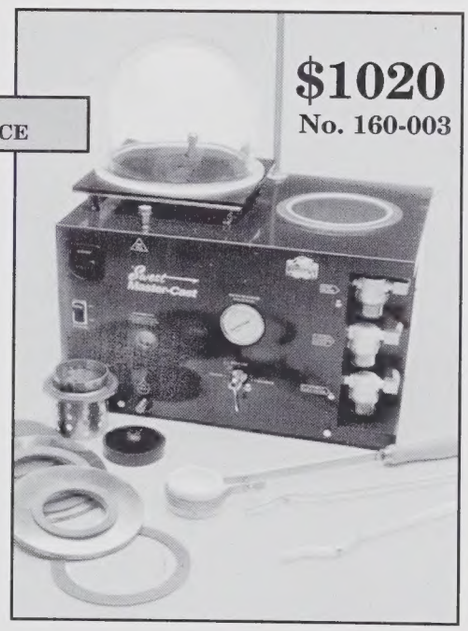

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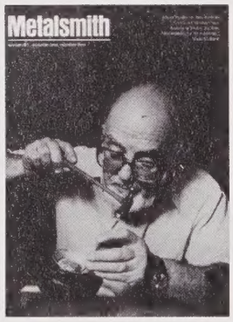

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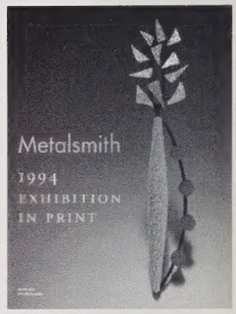

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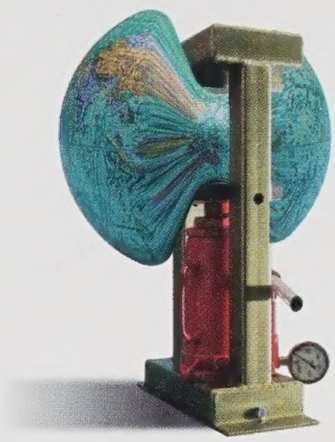

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The warmth of the desert sun is matched only by the heat generated at the annual Tucson Gem Extravaganza in February. We'll be there prominently- generating our own brand of inferno....with custom karated solders, wire, plate, virgin alloys... sterling, bronzes, and our own in house refining service. Try a sample of custom cut karated & silver solders, or stop by to discuss casting our alloys. We're located at the entrance of the MJSA pavilion at booth #A500. It may not be blistering hot outside, but we can guarantee you'll burn up inside....(Bring your SPF-15 with you)

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Albuquerque & Santa Fe, New Mexico

Mission: *To share the diversity and interactions within a legacy of light, space, and color; and explore the wealth of traditional and inventive metalwork.*

Museums: **In Albuquerque:** Museum of Natural History; Museum of Contemporary Art. **In Santa Fe:** Museum of Indian Arts & Culture; Museum of Fine Arts; Museum of International Folk Art; Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian; Museum of New Mexico. **In Taos:** Millicent Rogers Museum of Northern New Mexico.

Galleries: Ornament, JETT, Fairchild & Co., Mariposa, Diamond Studio/Gallery, Off the Wall, Weyrich, Emily Ruffin, Cline LewAllen Contemporary, Kent, Pachamama, and others to be announced.

Presenters: **Three "Talking Circles":** *Pathways of Learning*, *Typecast*, and *Makers & Sellers*. **Keynote Speaker:** Tom Joyce. Also: Barbara Okun, Ettagale Blauer, Dr. Thomas Chavez, Enid Kaplan, Ivan Barnett, Nancy Brown, Alan Revere, Denise Wallace, Robert Liu, Martha Egan, Frank Lewis, Merle White, Tresa Vorenberg, Duane Maktima, Jett Spencer, Emily Ruffin, Valerie Fairchild, Lois Moran, Robert Cardinale, Nancy Shapiro, Marilyn & Jack DaSilva, Marilyn Nicholson, Phil Poirier, David McFadden, Harold O'Connor, Stacey King, and the Colorado Metalsmiths Association (COMA).

Special Events:

- Pin swap
- Country/Western dance & buffet, with music by *South by Southwest*
- Tours to manufacturing facilities & historic Old Town Albuquerque
- Trip to Santa Fe's galleries & museums, with a reception at the Santa Fe Museum complex
- The Institute of American Indian Arts will host a reception, with food ($5 donation)
- Suppliers room
- Closing banquet & dance with the Latin band *Casablanca*

Silent Auction: Original jewelry, tools & more donated by artists and suppliers will raise money for SNAG. Contact Diane de Belxedon, 130 Lafayette Ave., Norfolk, VA 23504.

Student Slide Show: Features the work of promising college students in metalworking programs.

Pre-Conference Study: **April 13–15 in Taos:** Study with Harold O'Connor on "Contemporary Applications of Ancient Art;" with Jeff Wise on "Stone Cutting;" and with Phil Poirier on "Setting Stones." Each session is $225. At the Millicent Rogers Museum of Northern NM, a special exhibit and social event hosted by curator David McFadden. **April 15 in Santa Fe:** Lane Coulter leads a lecture and private tour of the Native American jewelry collections of three Santa Fe museums and research centers. Gourmet lunch and local transportation included. Limited to 12 people; $135.

Post-Conference Workshops: **April 20–21 in Taos:** study with Marilyn Nicholson on "Mechanics, Connections & Odd Stones." Also study with Nancy Shapiro and David Dear on "Direct Pour Casting." Each session is $175.

SNAG '97 will be held at the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque, in the heart of beautiful downtown Albuquerque.

Registration Fees

SNAG members: $195; non-members: $225; student members: $140; student non-members: $165. The first 100 registrants receive a $20 discount.

To Register

Contact the New Mexico '97 SNAG office at (813) 977-5326, or send your registration fee to the SNAG office, 5009 Londonderry Dr., Tampa, FL 33647.

Reservations & Room Rates

The following rates are available through March 10, 1997 (tax not included). Single or double: $110; triple: $125; quadruple: $135. Reservations must be secured by a deposit or credit card. For reservations, call (800) 233-1234. Room-sharing can be arranged; call Ava Yetter at (505) 271-9572 for information.

Meal Plan

An optional meal plan with three breakfasts and two lunches is available; details are included in the registration package.

Air Travel Arrangements

For information on special rates, call Kim at International Tours (505) 268-4348, or fax to (505) 266-9854. International Tours, 1525 Girard NE Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87106. All tickets are subject to the rules and regulations of the airlines.

About the Altitude

Albuquerque is at an elevation of about 5000 feet; Santa Fe is at about 7000 feet. Please consult your medical professional if you have concerns about how the high altitude may affect you.

All information is subject to change without notice. Subscribers to METALSMITH will receive a conference registration brochure early in 1997. To get a copy, or to request early registration forms, call chairperson Ivan Barnett at (505) 471-1014, or fax to chairperson Carrie Adell at (505) 438-0968.

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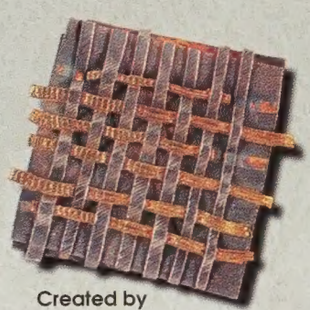
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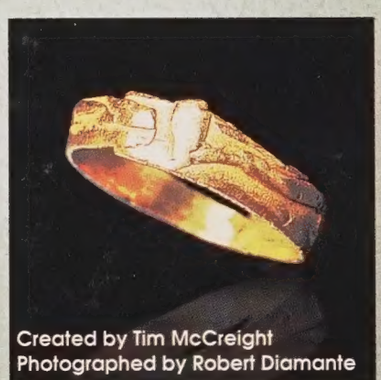
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